

Demographic Trends and the Planning and Management of Visitor Use in Wilderness



**National Wilderness
Visitor Use Management
Workshop, Colorado
Springs, CO April 8, 2003**

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www.srs.fs.fed.us/trends

ABOUT THIS PRESENTATION



1. A philosophy and principles of visitor use planning
2. The importance of understanding stockholder values
3. Trends and why they matter
4. Wilderness use and the visitor—results from on-site surveying
5. Education and communication and knowing who your audience is

PRINCIPLES of GOOD VISITOR

USE PLANNING

- **Wilderness is first a national resource for the benefit of all of society and for the benefit of all non-human species who live there**
- National, regional, and local social, economic, political, and environmental trends define the changing context within which your policy and management decisions resonate (or don't)
- Your optimum client base and most widely popular and beneficial offerings do not always match the wants of those standing at your door, and may not match wants of your current visitor base
- There are equity and other social issues associated with every decision you make and accounting for them is a responsibility of good planning
- Fragmented (compartmentalized) decision making is easier, but not better
- Good planning is forward looking, based on what could and should be, not necessarily what is or has been

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PRINCIPLES of GOOD VISITOR USE

PLANNING and MANAGEMENT

- Wilderness is first a national resource for the benefit of all of society and for the benefit of all non-human species who live there
- National, regional, local social, economic, political, environmental and opinion trends define the changing context within which your policy and management decisions resonate (or don't)
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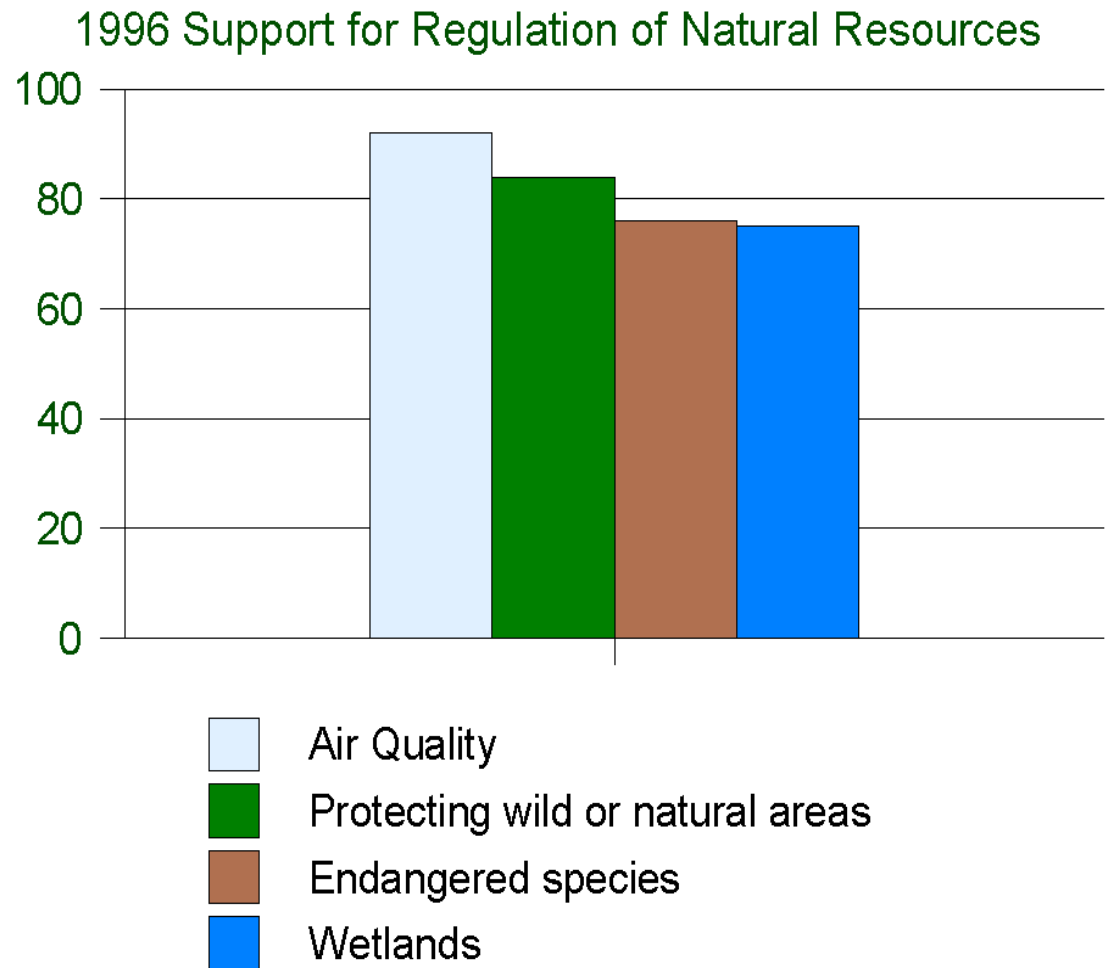
Basic Environmental Values Led to Creation of the NWPS

- The United States has designated 629 areas totalling about 106 million acres.
- On Federal lands, an additional 20 million acres are recommended for designation; over 50 million other roadless acres have been identified.
- The Congress is not likely to add substantially to the NWPS, neither is the Administration likely to move to protect and restore roadless conditions.
- Alpine, forest, desert, and water systems are better represented than grassland and subtropical ecosystems.
- Recreational use, nearby development, pollutants, and political winds are among the issues in management of the NWPS.

Humans Were Meant to Rule Over Nature



**Percentage
of Americans
Reporting
Regulation of
Natural
Resources is
“Just the
Right Amount”
or has
“Not Gone
Far Enough.”**



Public Views on Wilderness

- Nationally about 1/2 of American's 16+ report knowing about the NWPS
- Only 4.4% feel we have put too many acres into the NWPS:
 - Not enough 52.6%
 - About right 26.9%
 - Too much 4.4%
 - Not sure 15.4%

Trends in Public Values of Wilderness

Very or extremely Important (%)

Wilderness value	1994	2002	Change
Protecting water quality	78.9	93.1	14.2
Protection of wildlife habitat	78.6	87.8	9.2
Protecting air quality	78.0	92.3	14.3
For future generations	76.9	87.0	10.1
Protection for endangered spp	73.7	82.7	9.0
Preserving ecosystems	66.5	80.0	13.5
Scenic beauty	59.7	74.0	14.3
Future option to visit	59.4	75.1	15.7
Just knowing it exists	56.1	74.6	18.5
For scientific study	46.3	57.5	11.2
Recreation opportunities	48.9	64.9	16.0
Providing spiritual inspiration	43.2	56.5	13.3
Income for tourism industry	22.8	29.7	6.9

Forthcoming in *International Journal of Wilderness*

What Americans in 2002 Value about Wilderness

<u>Wilderness Value</u>	<u>Percentage Saying It Is</u>	
	<u>Extremely Important</u>	<u>Slightly or Not Important</u>
Protecting air quality	58.4	1.5
Protecting water quality	55.9	1.5
Protecting wildlife habitat	52.7	3.1
Protecting endangered species	49.8	5.0
Legacy for future generations	49.1	3.1
Preserving unique ecosystems and genetics	44.3	5.1
Future option to visit	37.5	7.1
Just knowing it is preserved	36.9	6.4
Providing scenic beauty	35.4	5.5
Providing recreation opportunities	27.8	7.2
Providing spiritual inspiration	25.9	16.7
Undisturbed area for scientific study	23.9	11.6
Providing income for tourism industry	9.7	33.5

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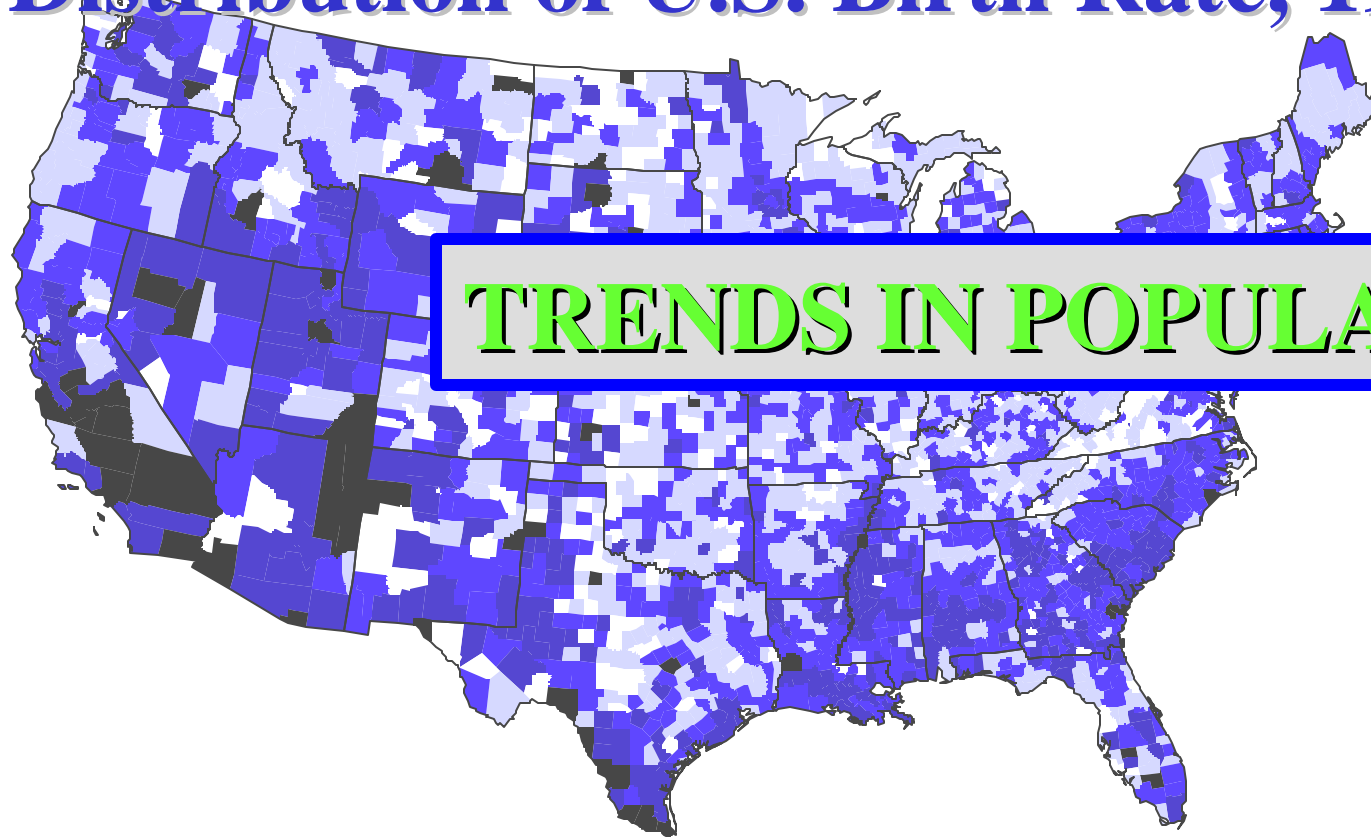
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A TIME OF IMPORTANT TRENDS AND RISING IMPORTANCE OF WILDERNESS

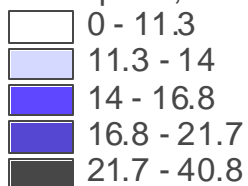
**POPULATION GROWTH, SHIFTING
DEMOGRAPHICS, MIGRATION TO
HIGH AMENITY AREAS, RISING
RECREATION DEMAND, NEW
TECHNOLOGIES**

Filling the West: Distribution of U.S. Birth Rate, 1990



TRENDS IN POPULATION

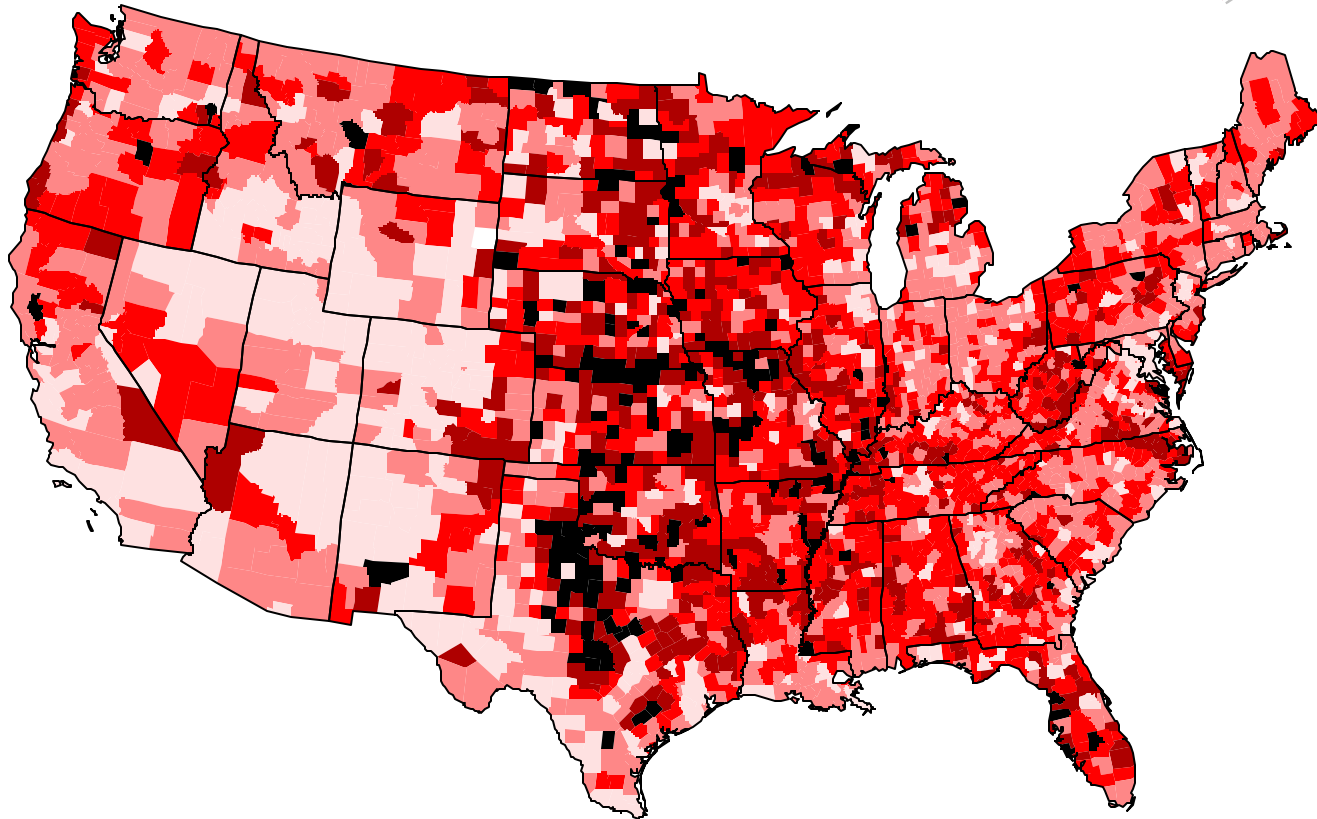
Births per 1,000 Population



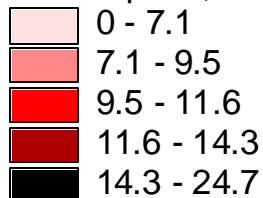
Births per 1,000 Population by
Region and Conterminous U.S.

North	15.8
Pacific Coast	19.6
South	16.5
Rocky Mountains	17.1
Conterminous States	16.7

Emptying the Midwest: Distribution of U.S. Death Rates, 1990



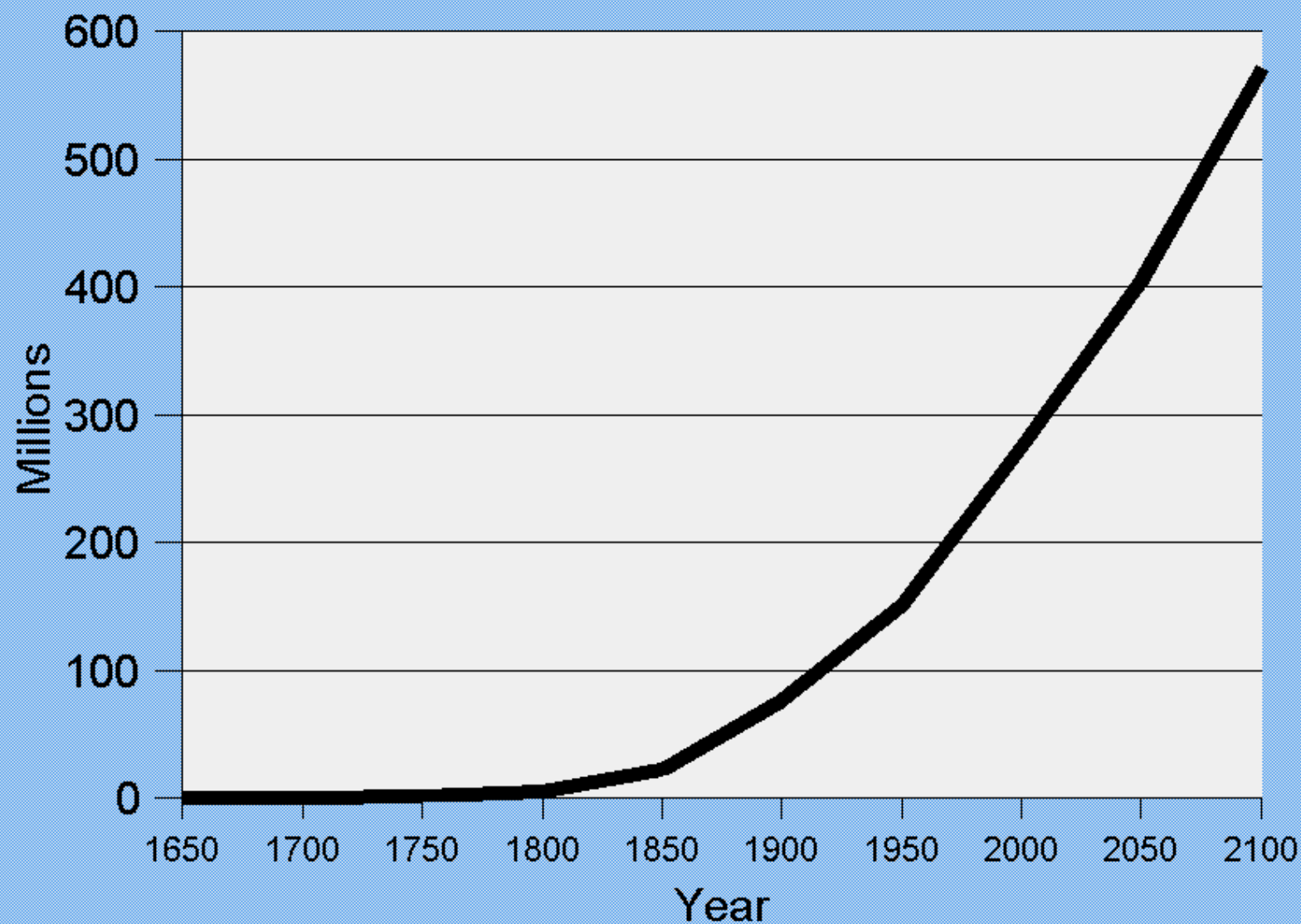
Deaths per 1,000 Population



Deaths per 1,000 Population
by Region and Conterminous U.S.

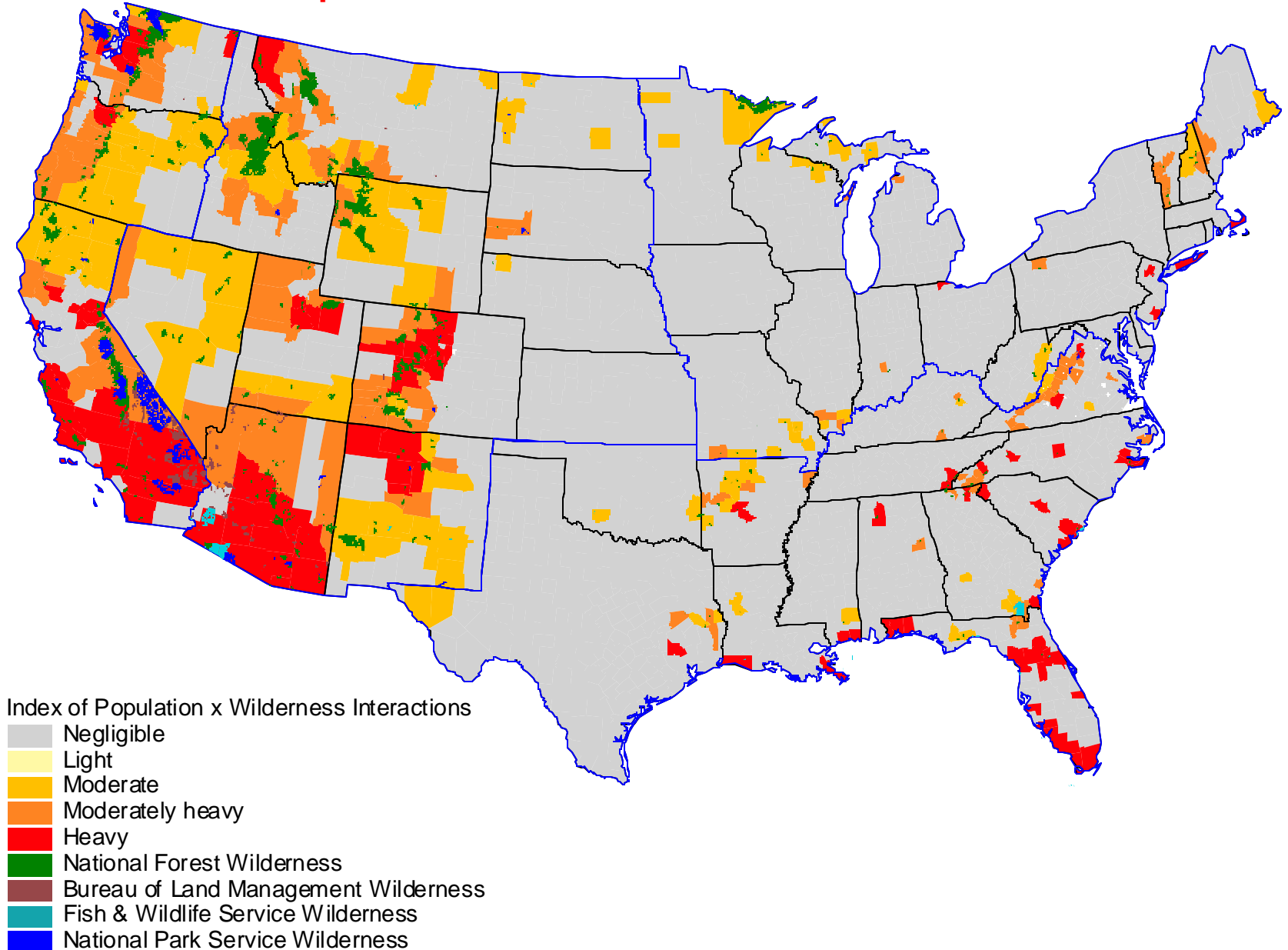
North	10.2
Pacific Coast	8.9
South	10.2
Rocky Mountains	9.8
Conterminous States	10.1

UNMATCHED POPULATION GROWTH



Future Wilderness Hotspots (2020)

Ambient Population Pressures on Counties with Wilderness



The Changing American Society

- About 1 million new immigrants per year

- More people:

1990	248 mm
2000	275 mm
2020	325 mm
2050	404 mm
2075	481 mm
2100	571 mm

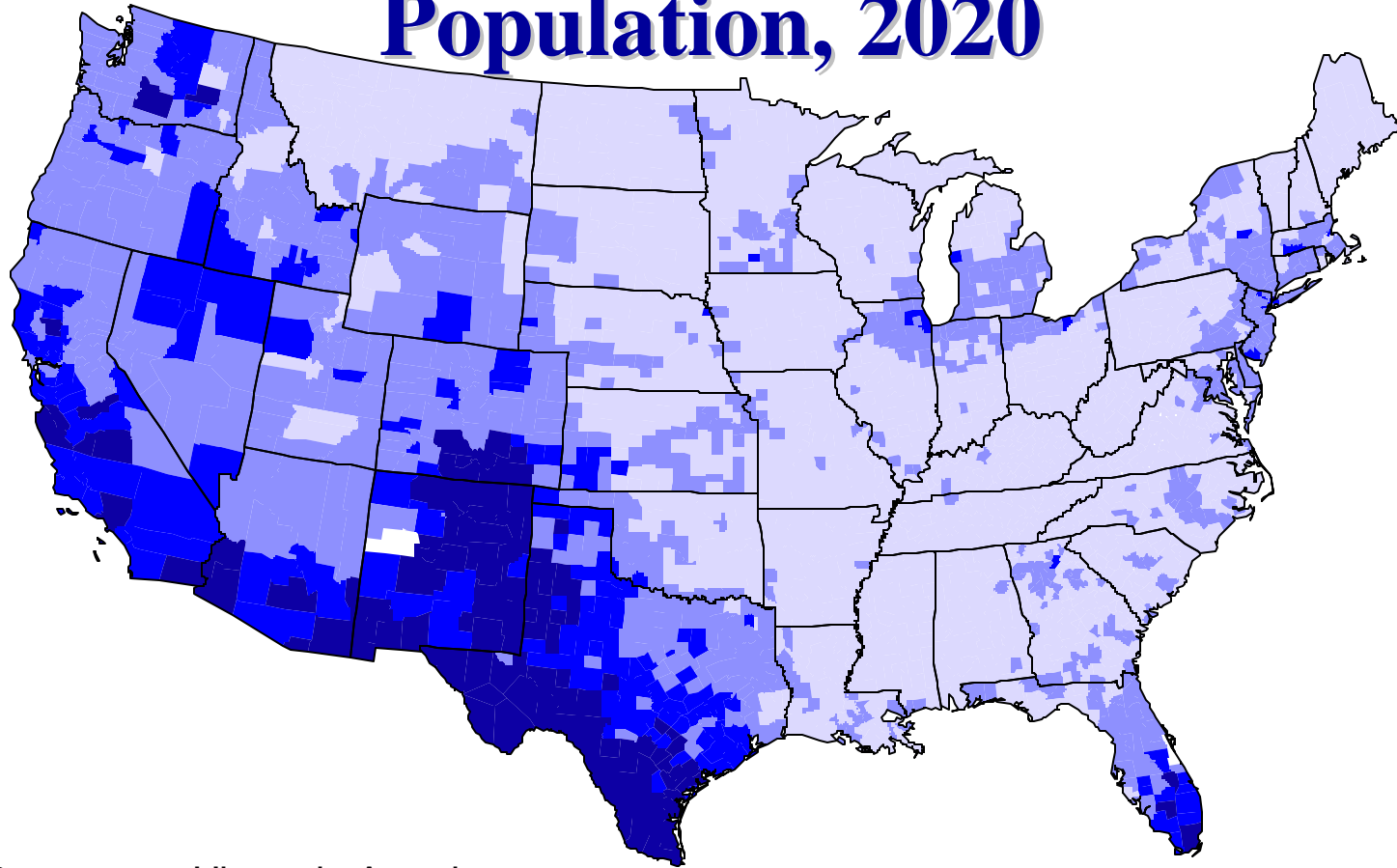
- Increasingly urban, 81% live in cities and towns

- Getting older: Median age 35® 38 (by 2020)

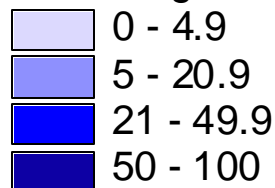
- Changing ethnicities by 2050:

Anglo Americans	76%® 50%
African Americans	12% ® 15%
Hispanic Americans	9% ® 21%
Asian Americans	4% ® 11%

Distribution of Projected U.S. Hispanic Population, 2020



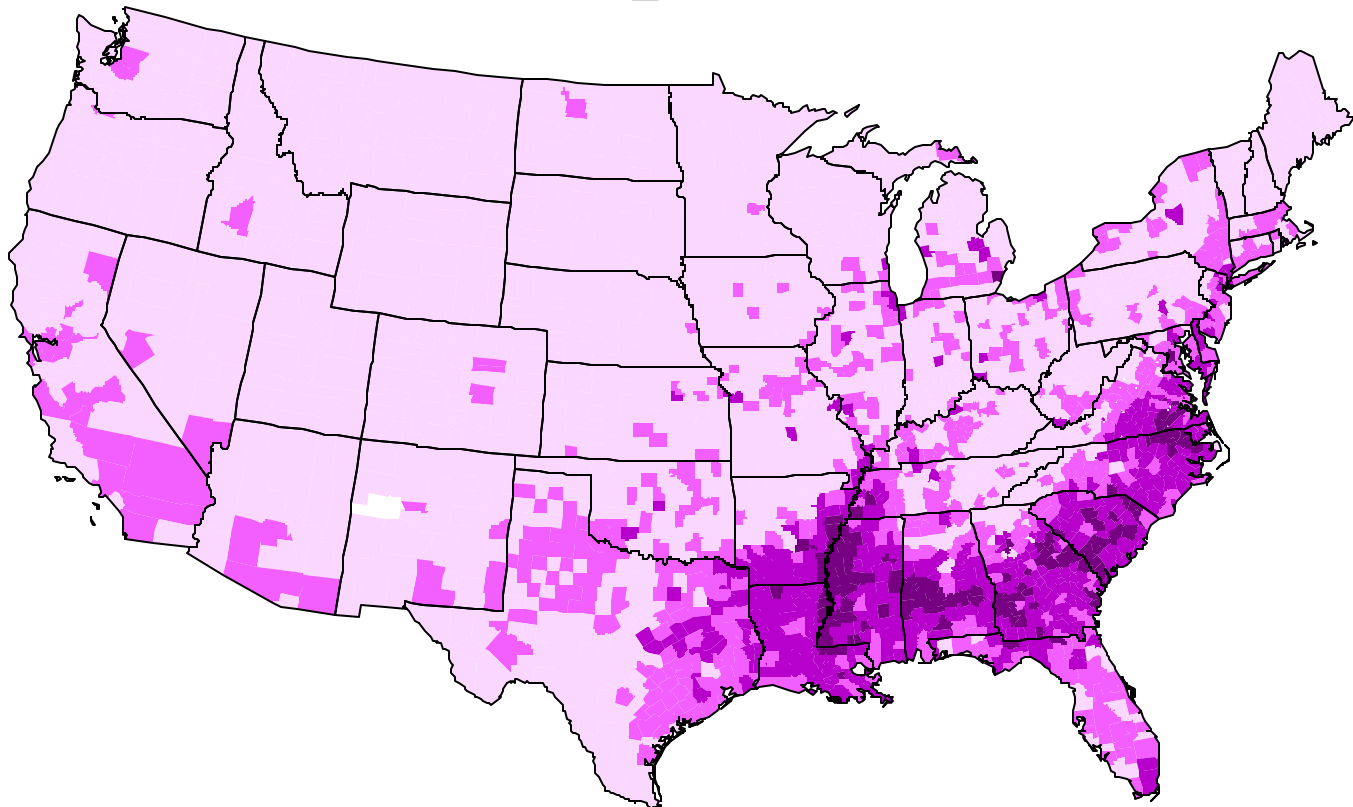
Percentage Hispanic-American



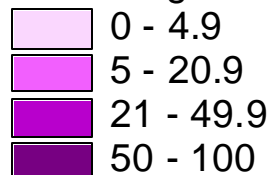
Percentage Hispanic-American by Region
and Conterminous U.S.

North	9.6
Pacific Coast	30.6
South	16.2
Rocky Mountains	21.3
Conterminous States	16.4

Distribution of Projected U.S. African-American Population, 2020



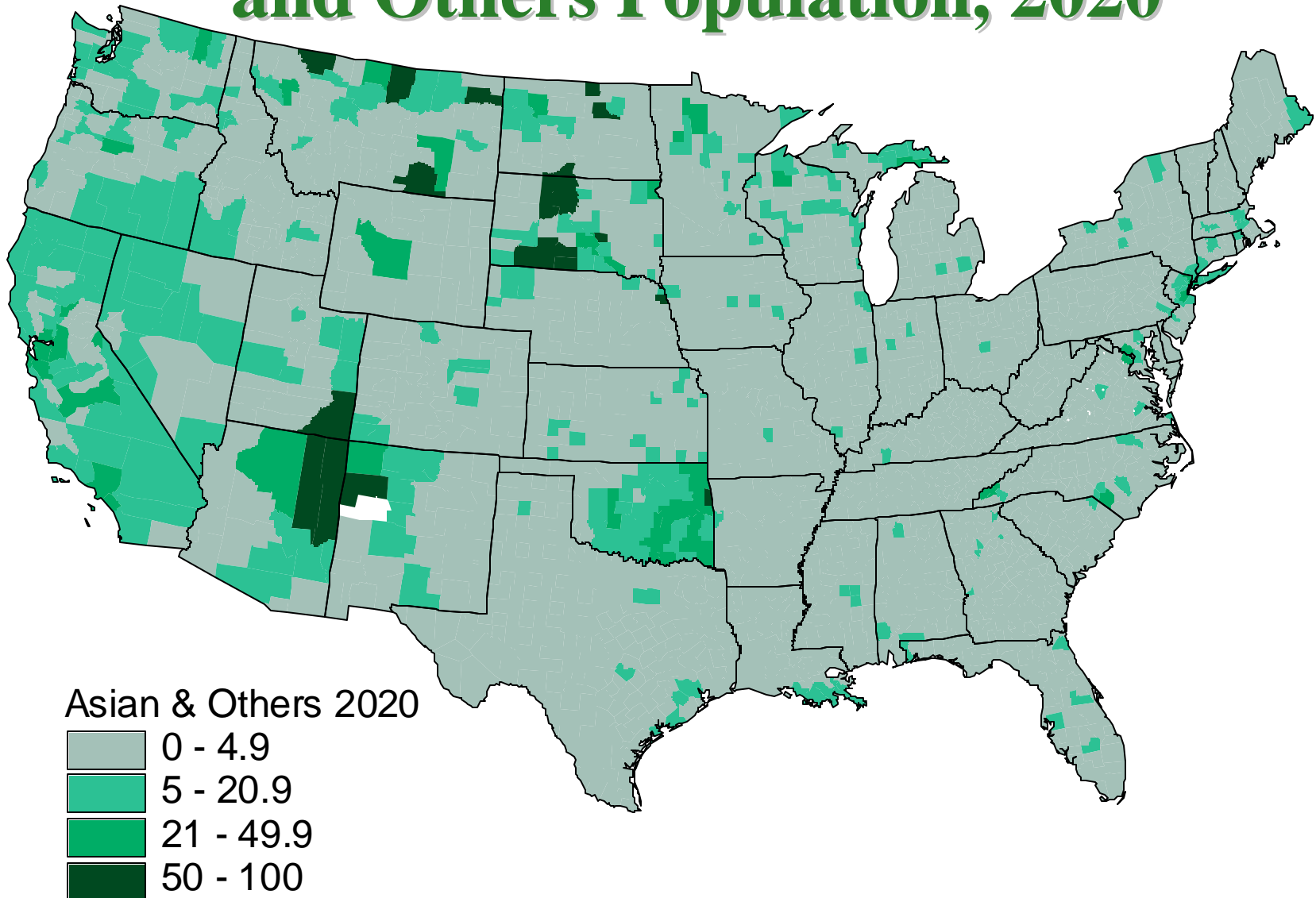
Percentage African-American



Percentage African-American by Region and Conterminous U.S.

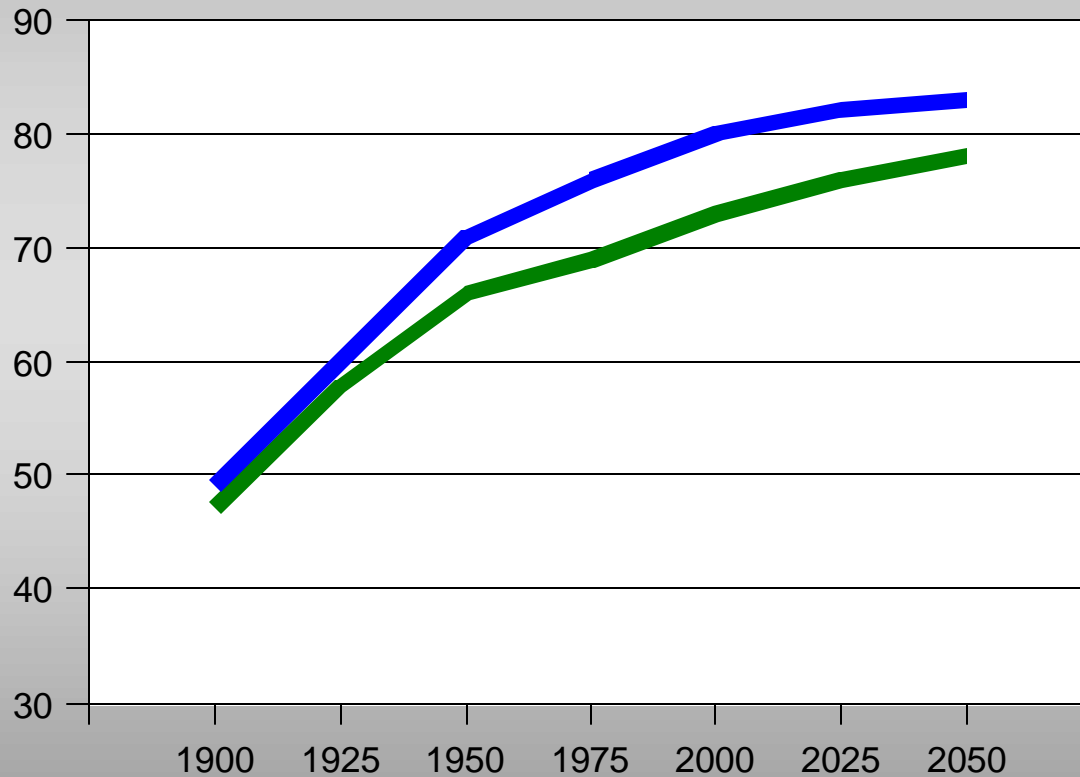
North	12.2
Pacific Coast	6.6
South	18.5
Rocky Mountains	3.3
Conterminous States	12.6

Distribution of Projected U.S. Asians and Others Population, 2020



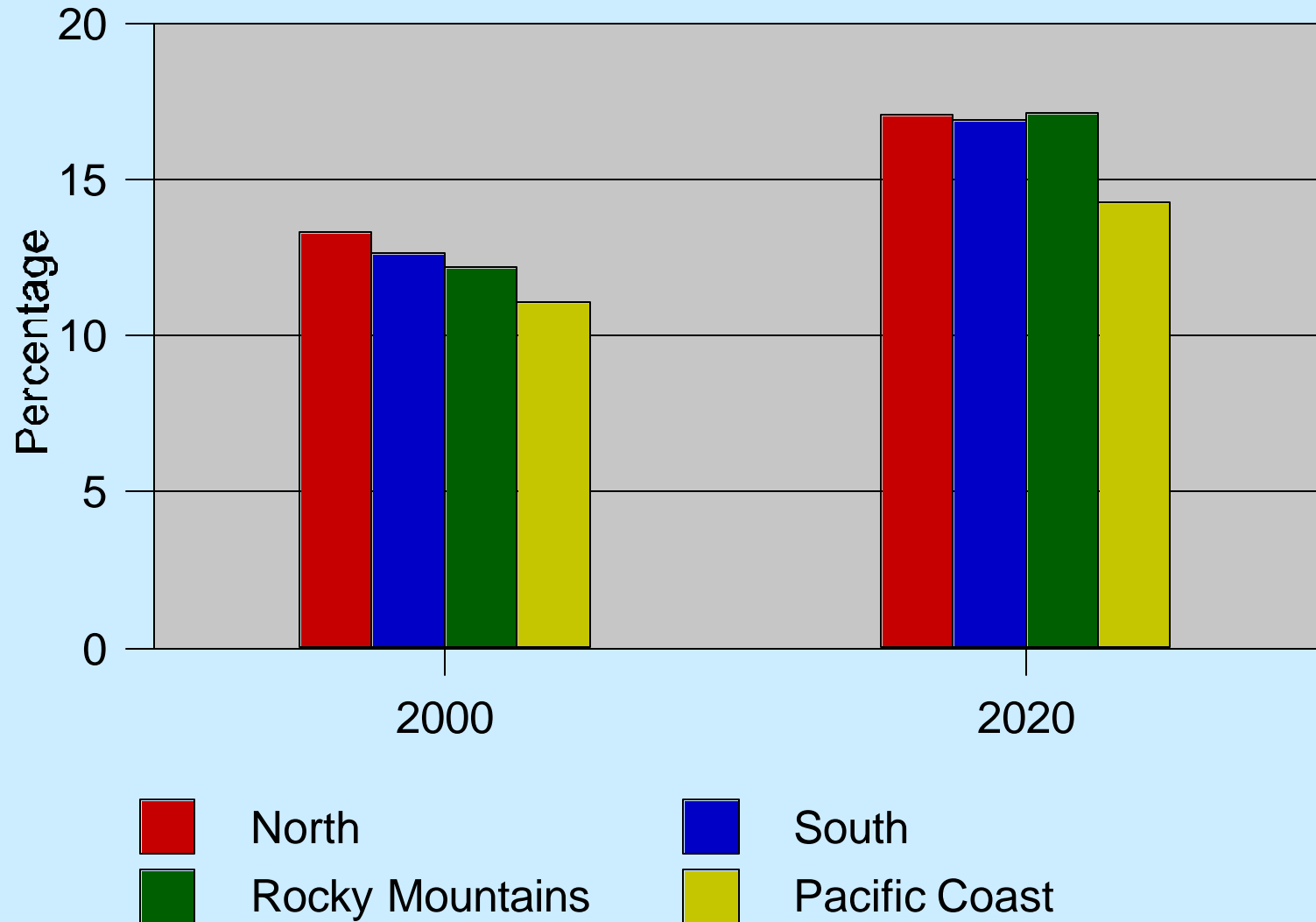
Life Expectancy, 1900-2050

(life expectancy at birth by sex in U.S., 1900-1975, and
middle-series projection, 2000-2050)

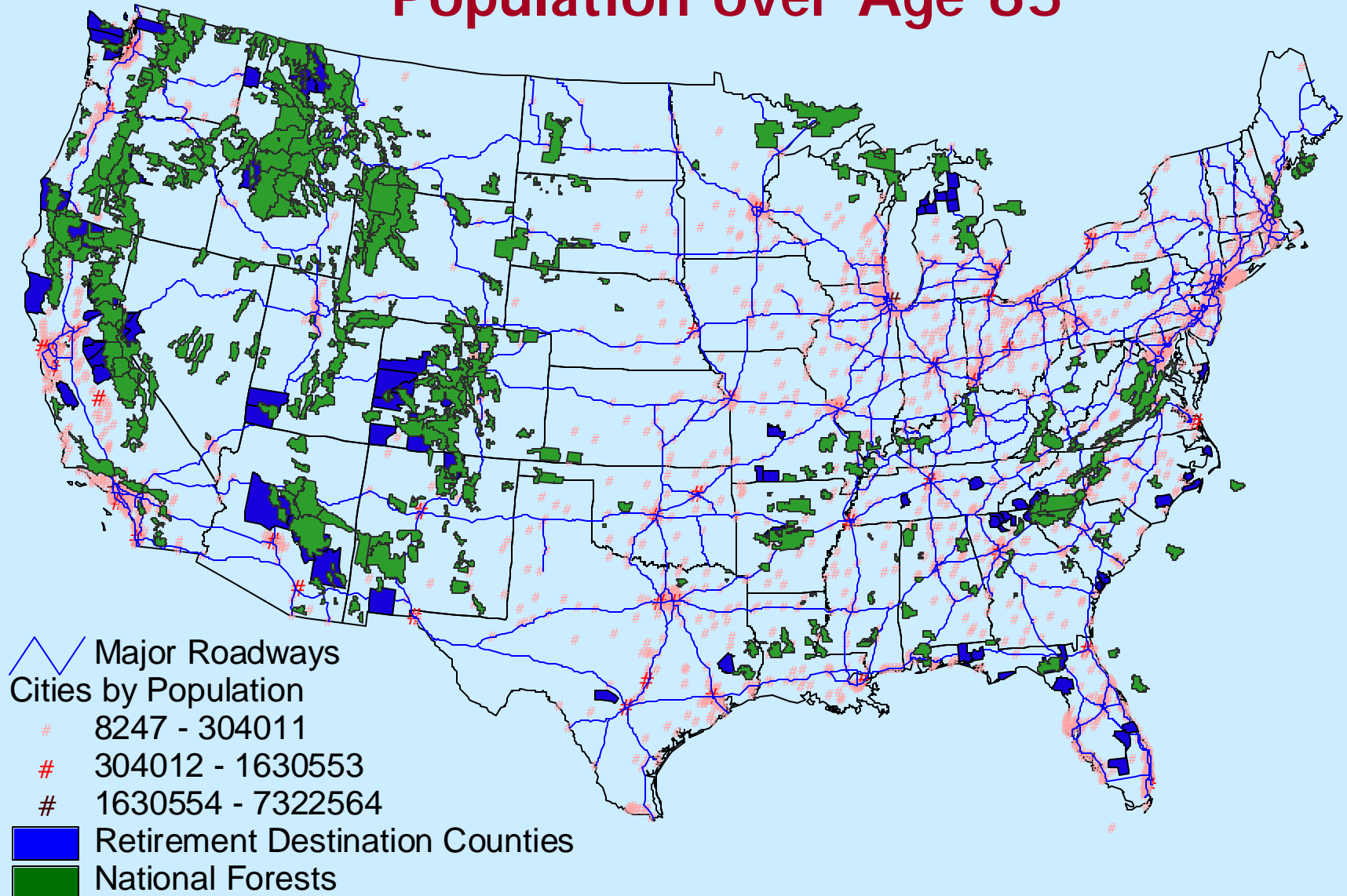


Source: Social Security Administration, Office of the Chief Actuary

Projected Population Age 65 & Over, 2000 & 2020



Projected Retirement Destination Counties within Top 20% of Counties Increasing in Population over Age 65

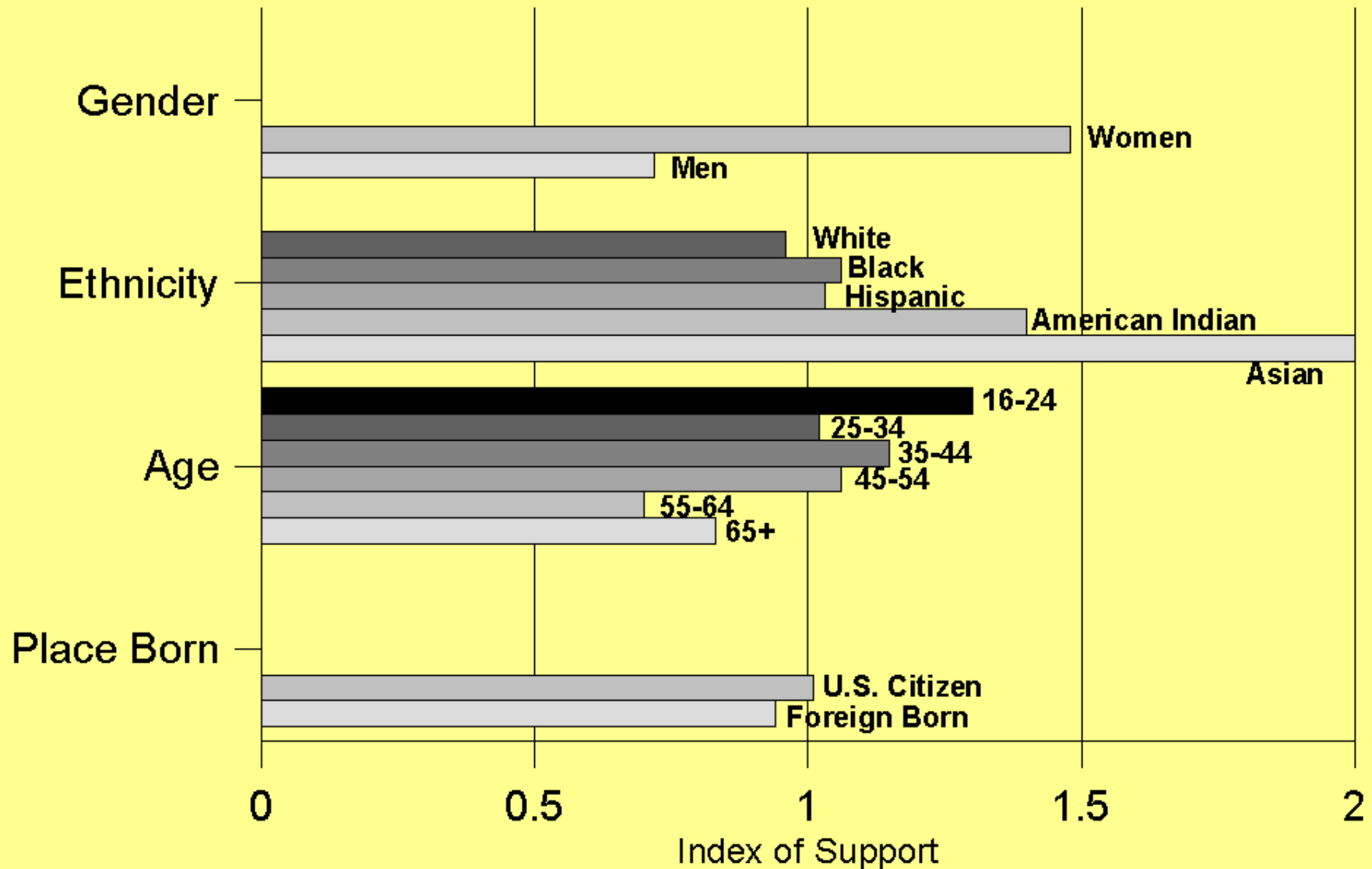


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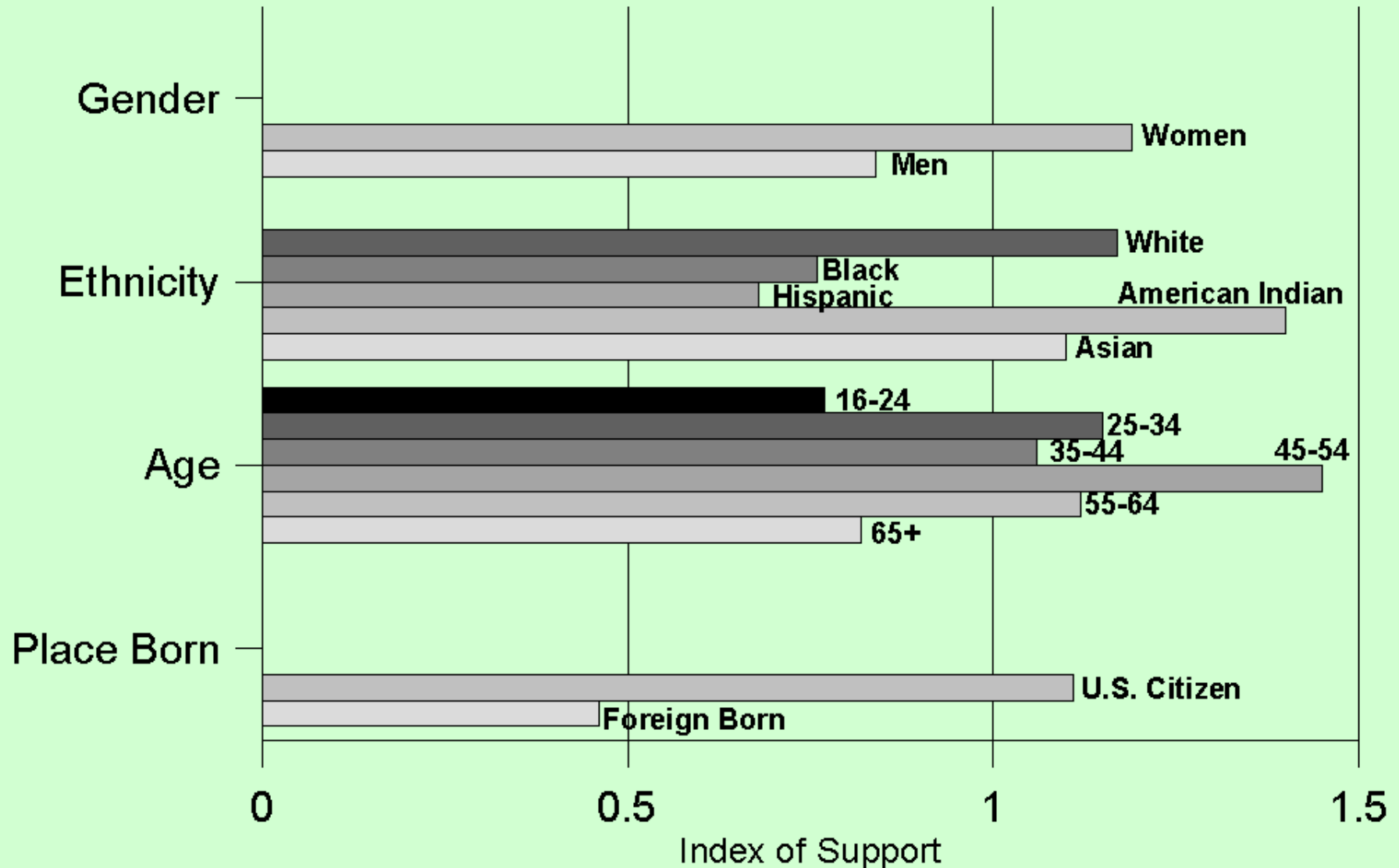
The Most Important Benefits of Wilderness

Protecting air quality



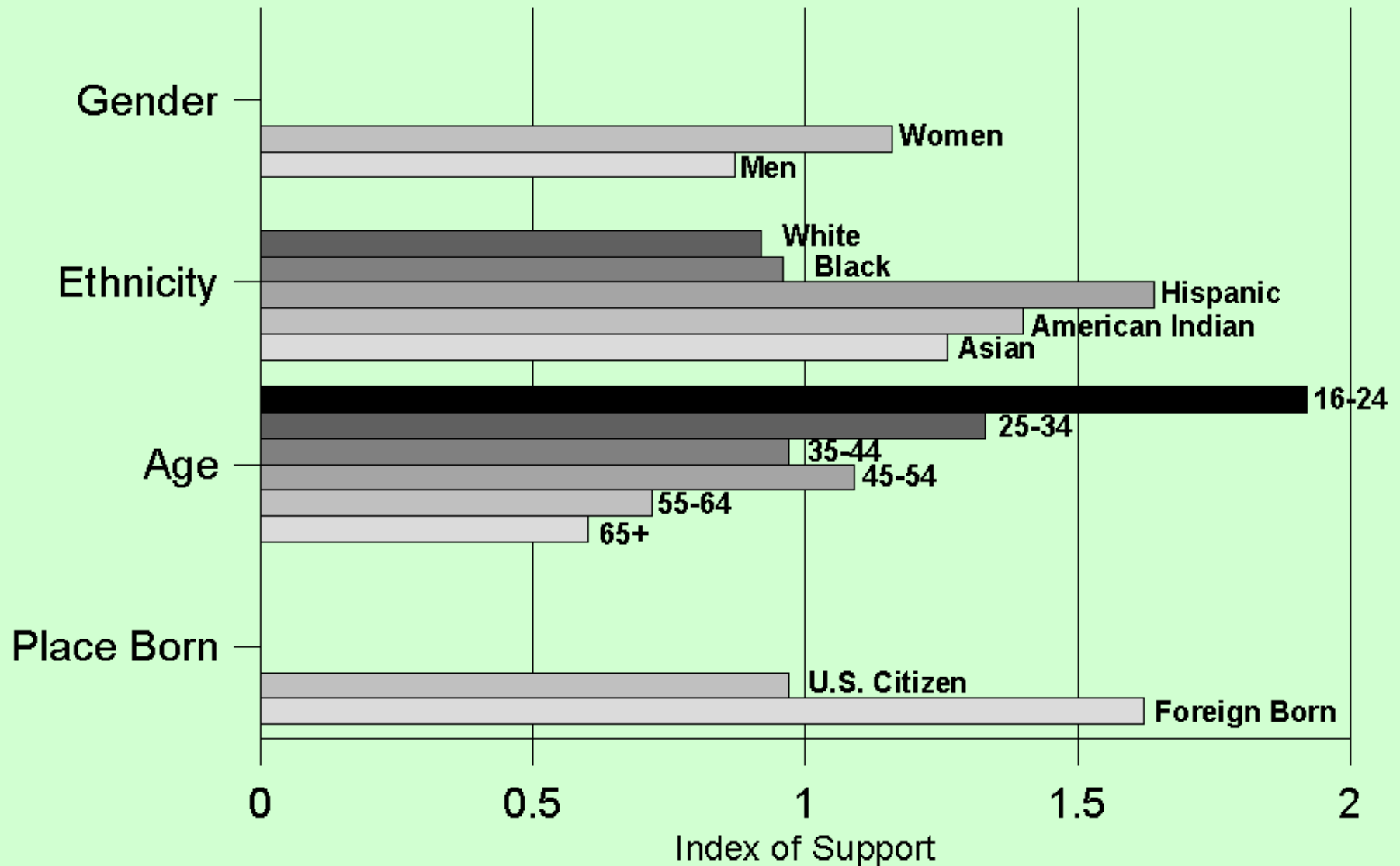
The Most Important Benefits of Wilderness

Protecting Water Quality



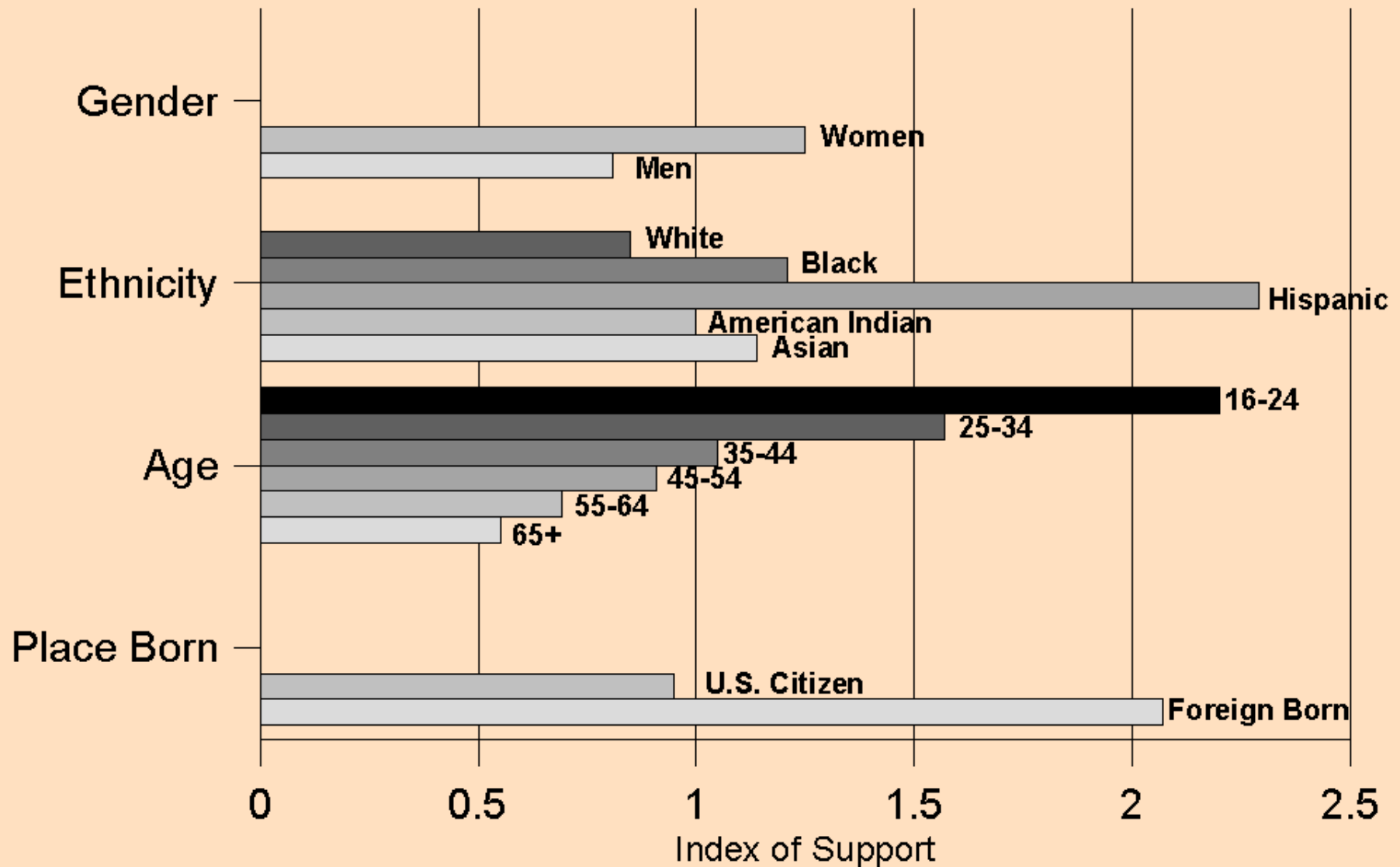
The Most Important Benefits of Wilderness

Protecting wildlife habitat



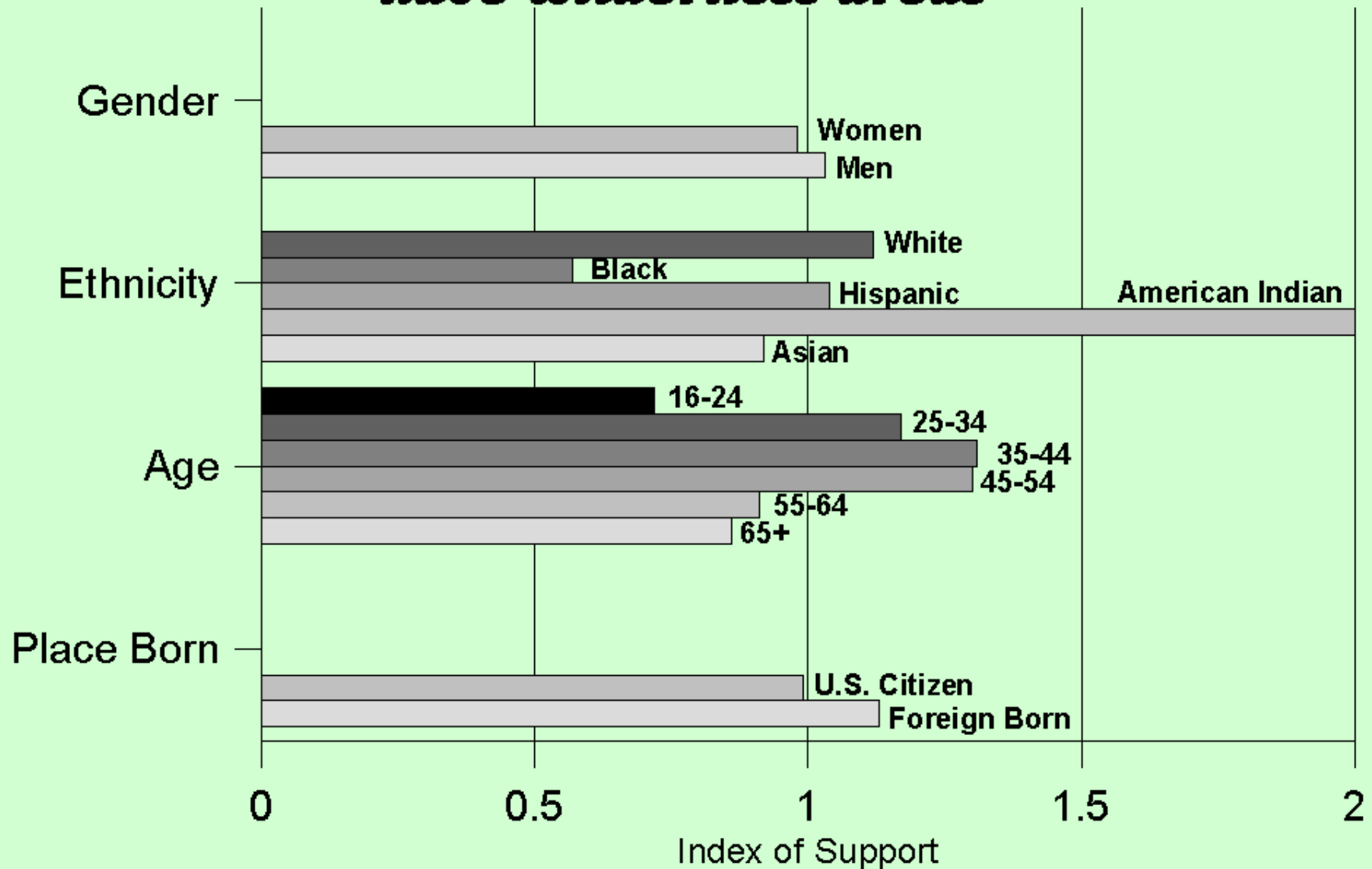
The Most Important Benefits of Wilderness

Protecting rare and endangered species



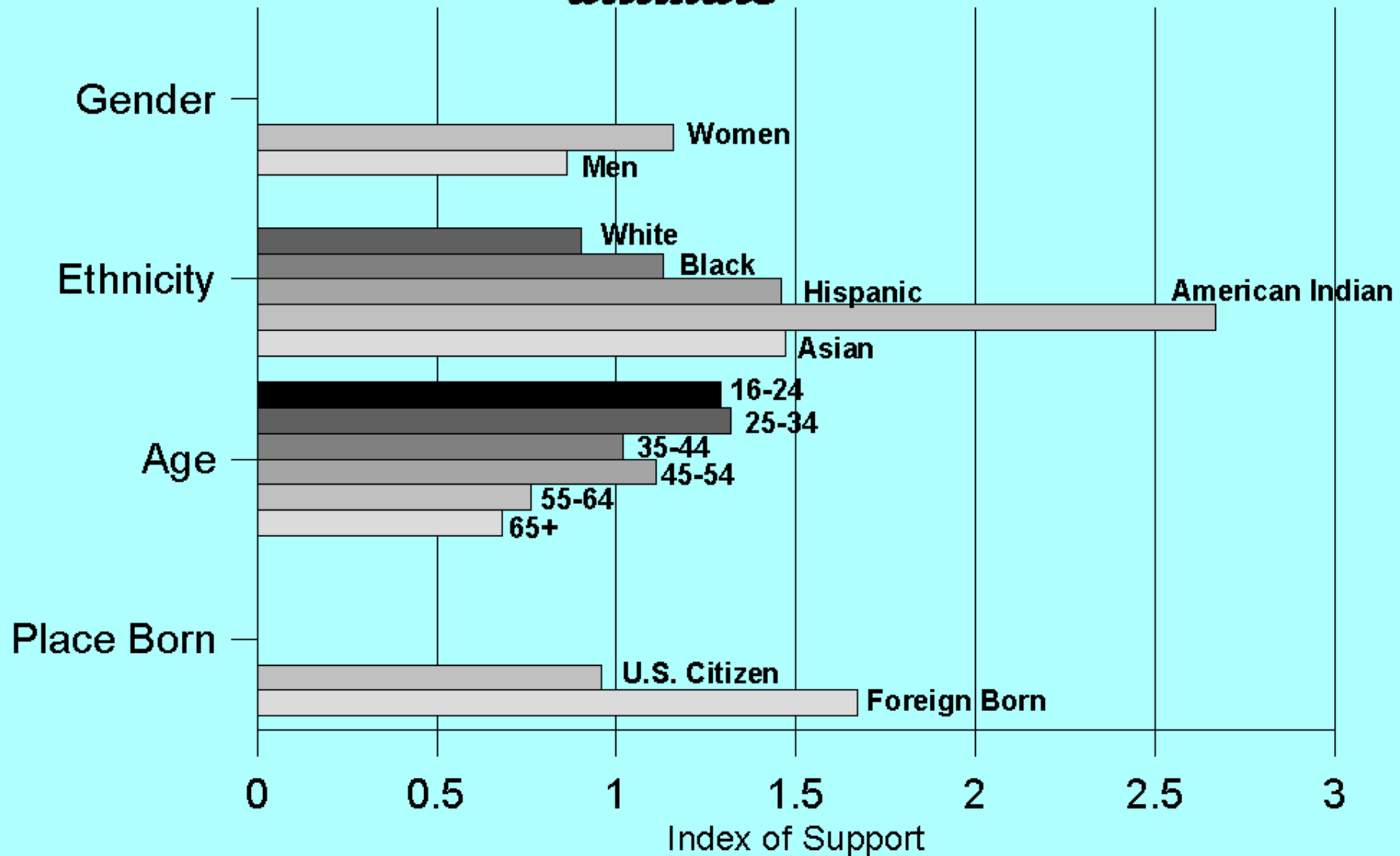
The Most Important Benefits of Wilderness

Knowing that future generations will have wilderness areas



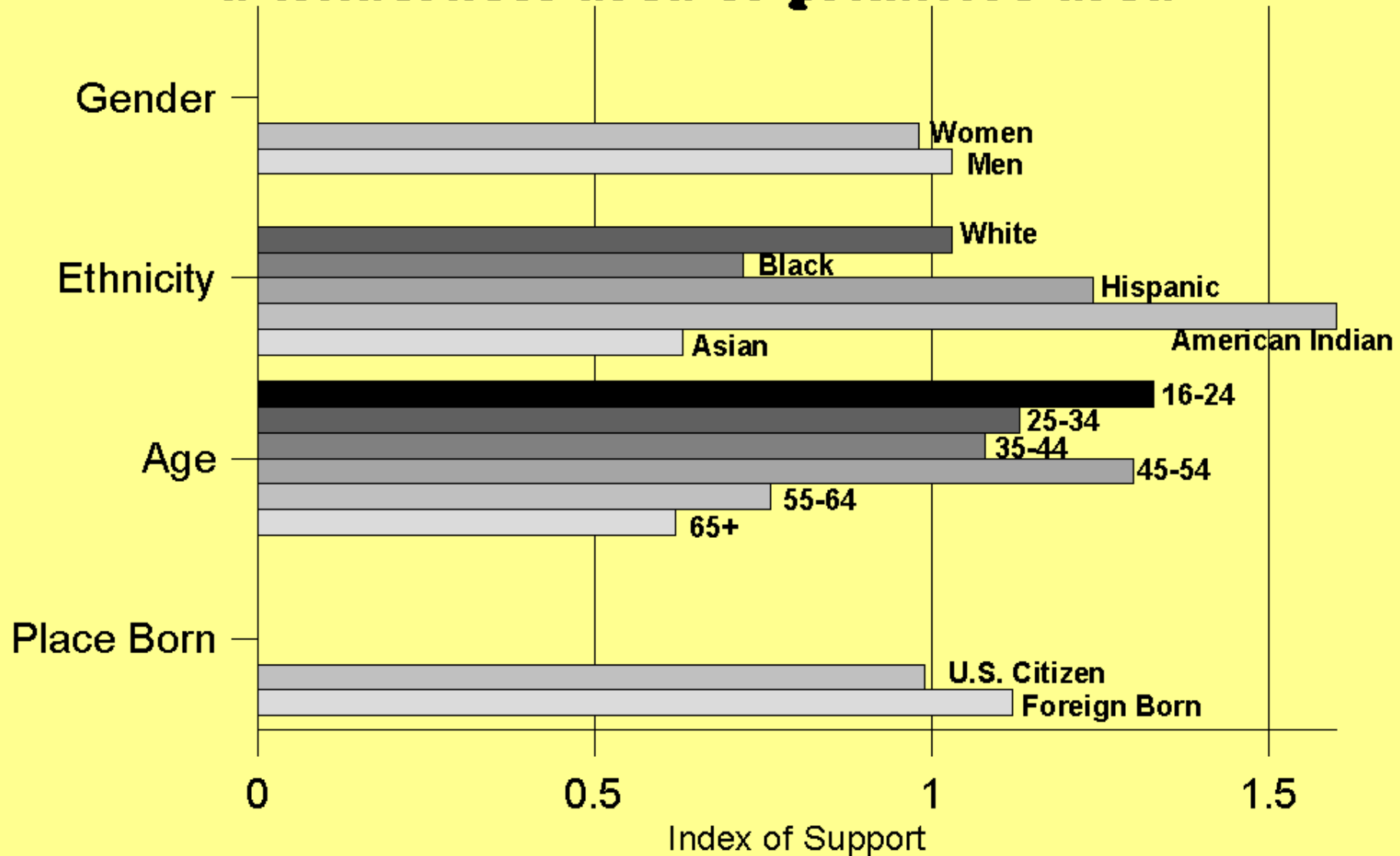
The Most Important Benefits of Wilderness

Preserving unique wild plants and animals



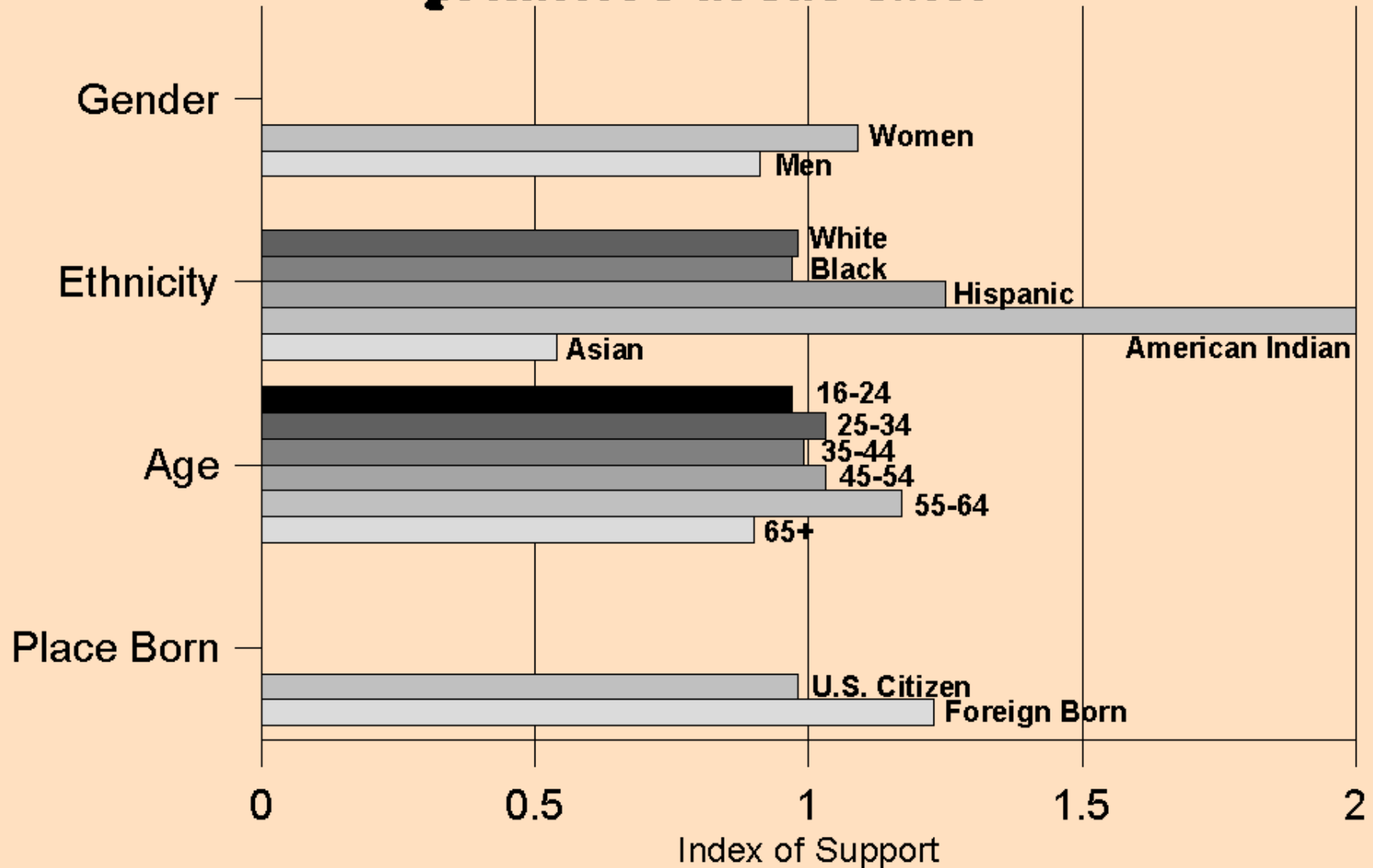
The Most Important Benefits of Wilderness

***Knowing I will have future option to visit
a wilderness area or primitive area***



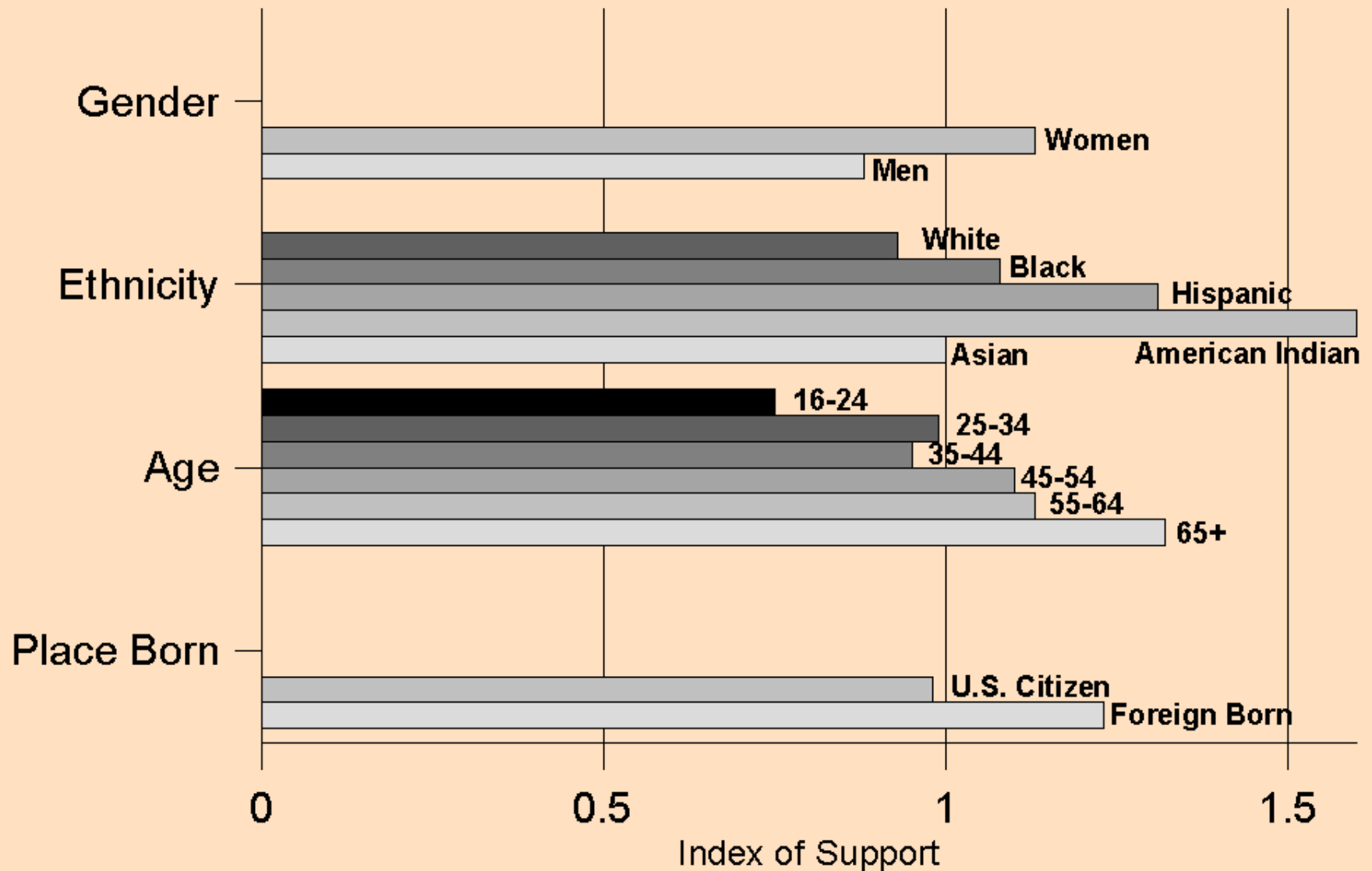
The Most Important Benefits of Wilderness

Just knowing that wilderness and primitive areas exist



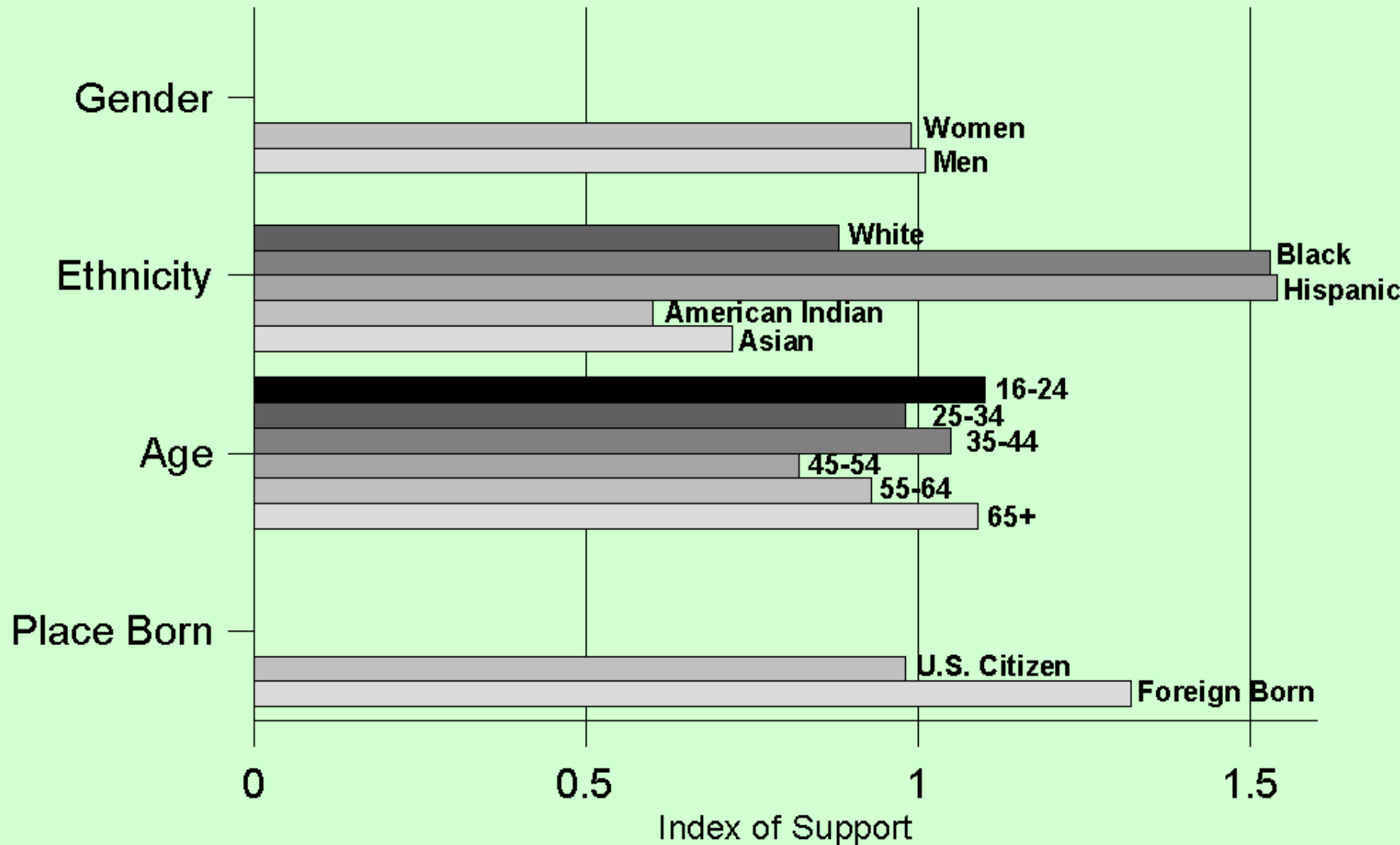
The Most Important Benefits of Wilderness

Providing scenic beauty



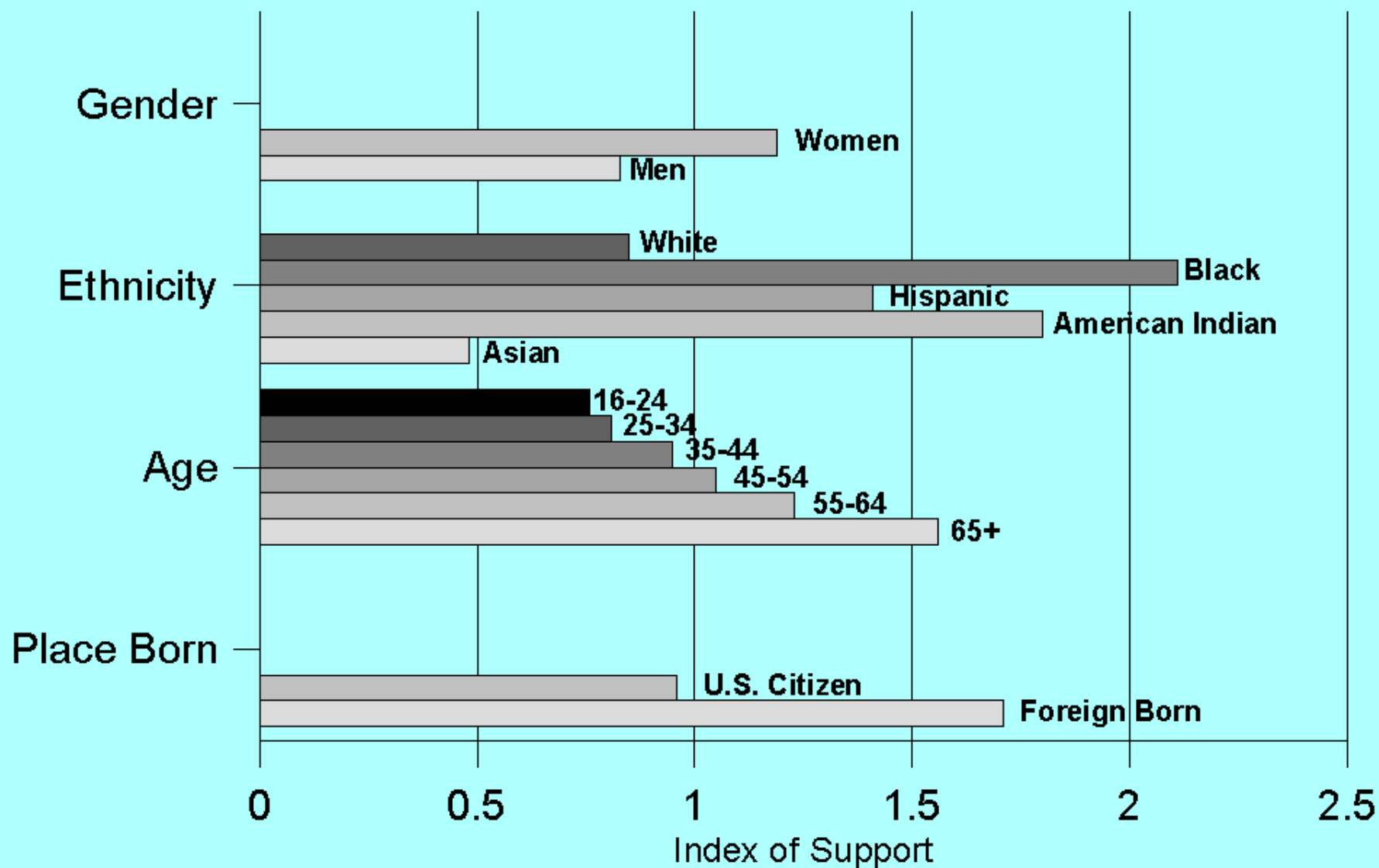
The Most Important Benefits of Wilderness

Providing recreation opportunities



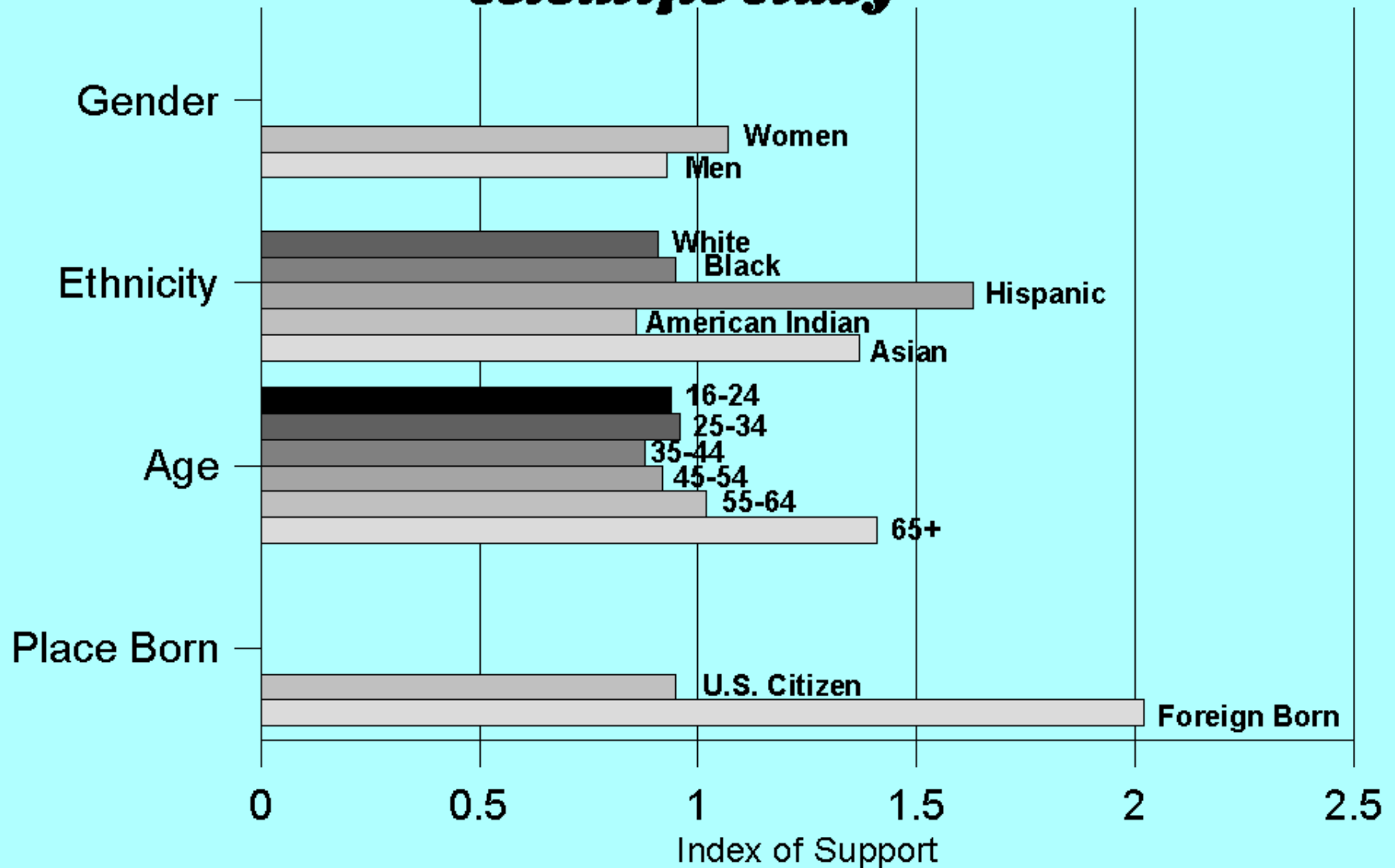
The Most Important Benefits of Wilderness

Providing spiritual inspiration



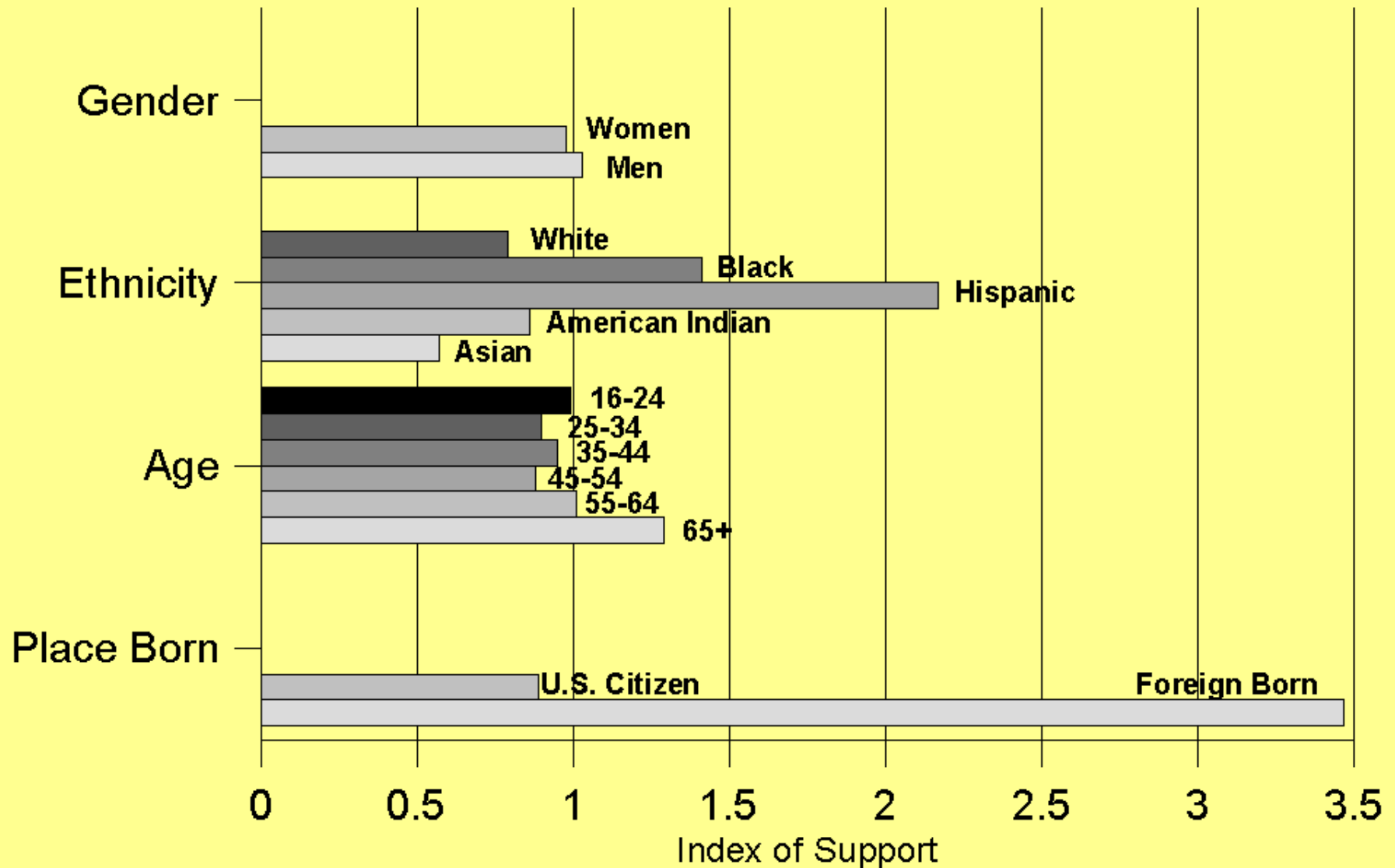
The Most Important Benefits of Wilderness

Preserving natural areas for scientific study



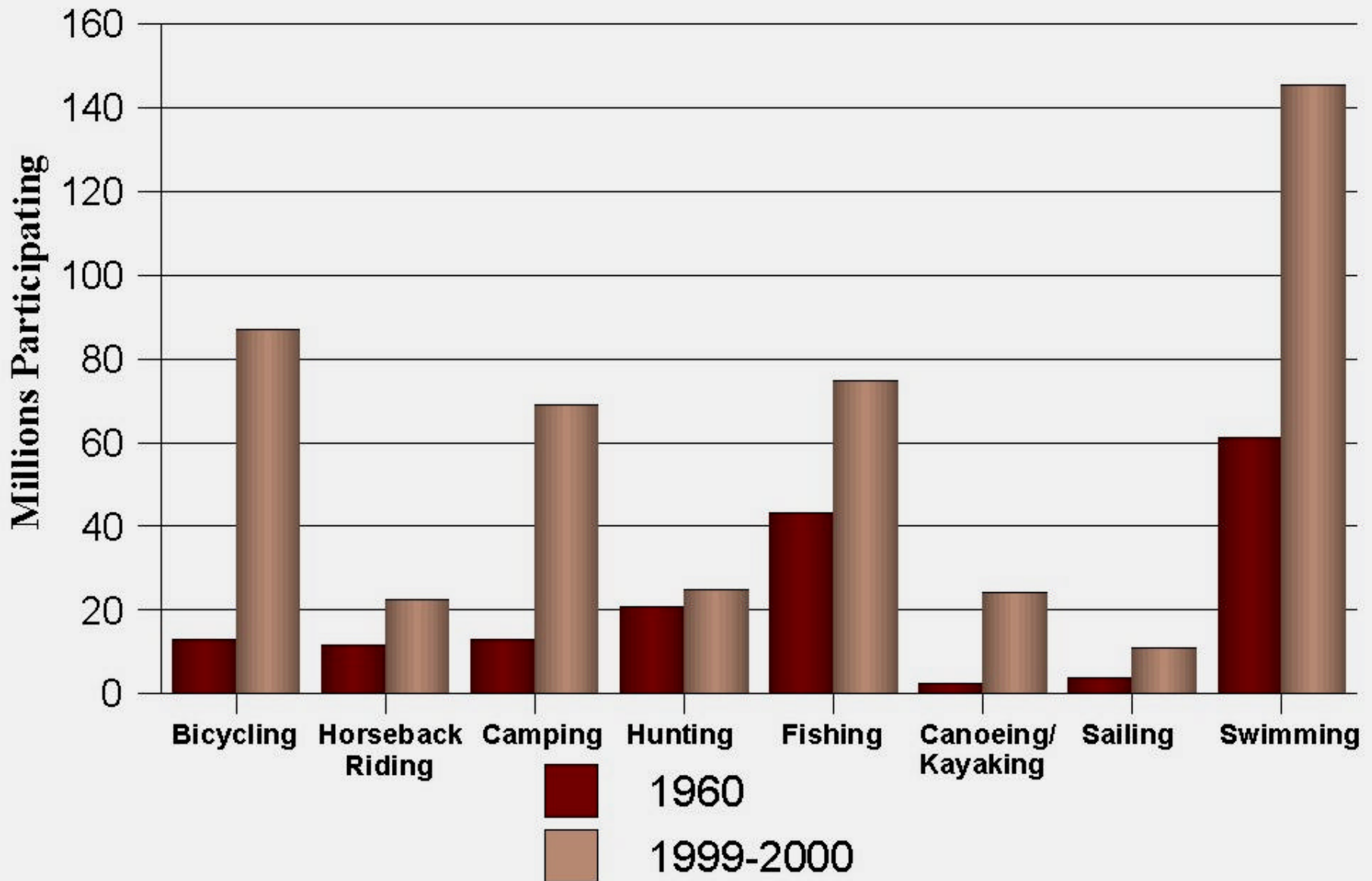
The Most Important Benefits of Wilderness

Providing income for the tourist industry



**DEMAND FOR
OUTDOOR RECREATION
AND PLACES TO
RECREATE CONTINUE
TO GROW**

LONG TERM TRENDS SINCE 1960



Fastest Growing One-Half

Trends, 1982 - 1995

(Millions of Participants, 16 and older)

Activity	Number in 1982-83	Number in 1994-95	Percent Change
Bird Watching	21.2	54.1	+155.2
Hiking	24.7	47.8	+93.5
Backpacking	8.8	15.2	+72.7
Downhill Skiing	10.6	16.8	+58.5
Camping-Primitive Area	17.7	28.0	+58.2
Off-Road Driving	19.4	27.9	+43.8
Walking	93.6	133.7	+42.8
Motorboating	33.6	47.0	+39.9
Sightseeing	81.3	113.4	+39.5
Camping-Developed Area	30.0	41.5	+38.3
Swimming/river, lake, or ocean	56.5	78.1	+38.2
Snowmobiling	5.3	7.1	+34.0

Fastest Growing in the Late 1990s

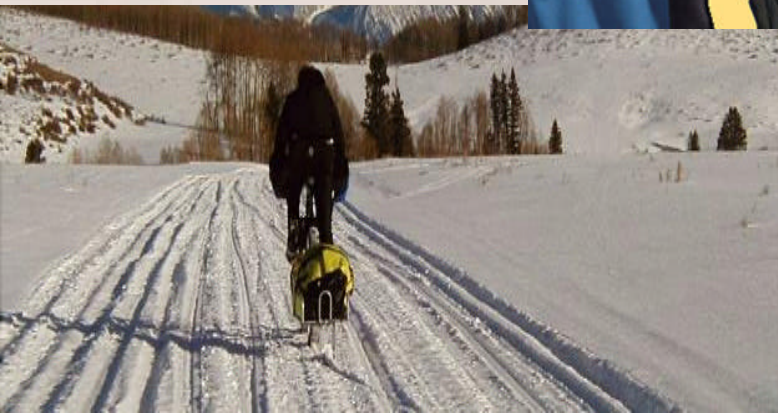
Activity	Millions in 2000-01	Percent Change 1994-2001
Kayaking	7.29	182.56
Snowboarding	10.53	137.70
Jet skiing	20.31	119.33
View or photograph fish	53.06	97.84
Soccer outdoors	17.33	87.15
Snowmobiling	11.81	69.93
Ice fishing	6.22	59.49
Sledding	31.22	56.18
Viewing wildlife	95.26	55.88
Backpacking	22.76	53.78
Day hiking	70.62	51.29
Bicycling	84.60	50.80
Horseback riding	20.95	50.29

Population-wide Total (Overlapping) Occasions Per Year by Groupings of Activities (2000-01)

PERCENT OF POPULATION PARTICIPATING AND PER-CAPITA PARTICIPATION OCCASSIONS

All activities	98.5%	273.8
Viewing, learning, gathering activities	88.4%	136.1
Developed site activities	94.9%	93.3
Activities on trails	40.4%	40.3
Swimming, surfing, and other beach activities	2.8%	36.6
Motorized activities	62.0%	31.3
Hunting and fishing	38.1%	26.9
Snow activities	19.3%	13.3
Risk activities	35.2%	12.0
Non-motorized activities	22.8%	7.9

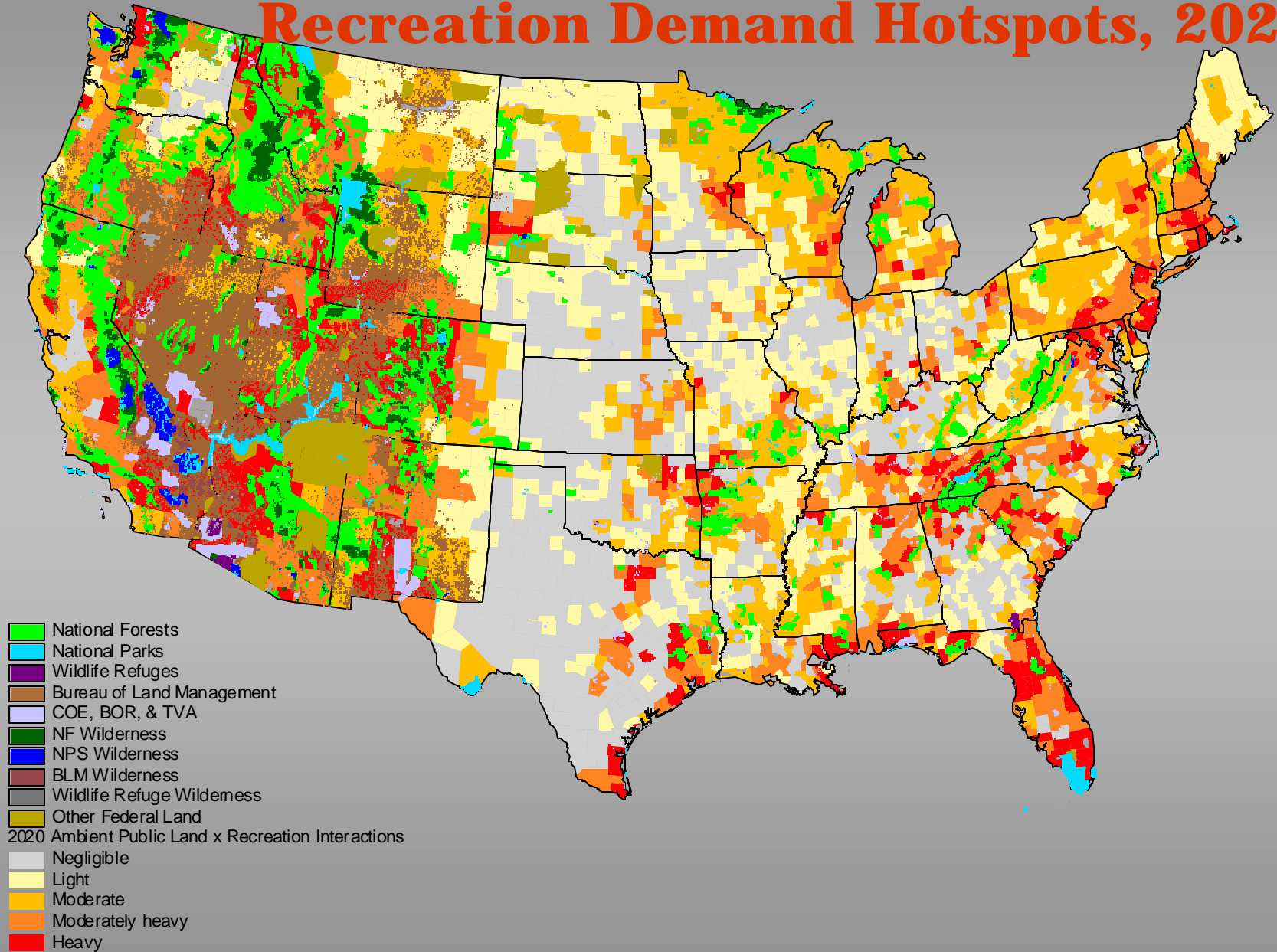
**DEMAND FOR TRAILS AND
FOR VIEWING/LEARNING
ACTIVITIES ARE
GROWING AND PRIME
ACTIVITIES FOR
WILDERNESS AREAS**



eXtreme gear
HAS IT!

K2SNOW

Public Lands Overlaid onto Projected Recreation Demand Hotspots, 2020



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RESULTS FROM THE NATIONAL VISITOR USE MONITORING PROJECT

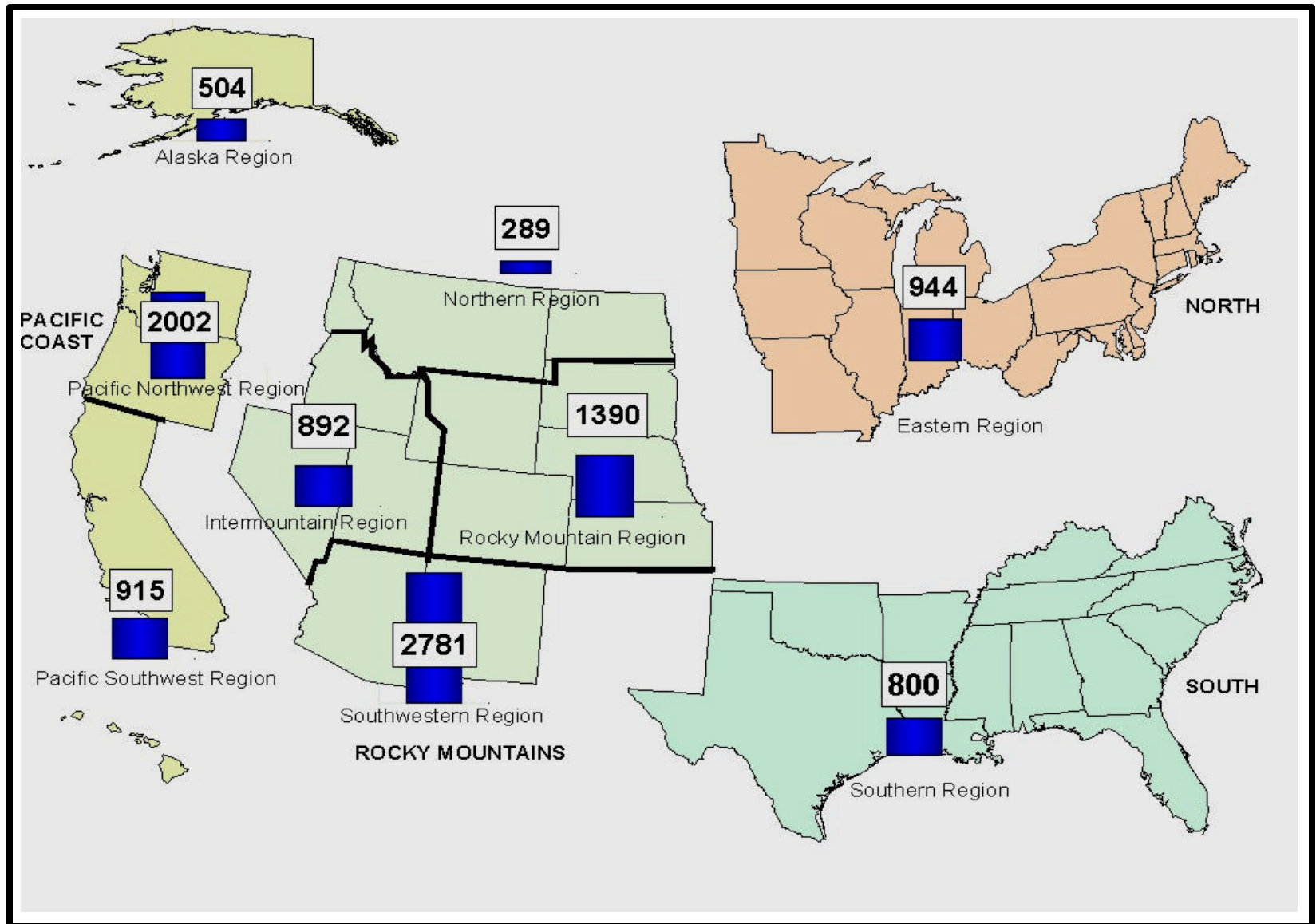
Information Collected

- ❖ # of people on a Forest that visit Wilderness
- ❖ Average length of stay at site/area
- ❖ Average length of stay on Forest
- ❖ Economic expenditure during trip
- ❖ Satisfaction with site/area
- ❖ # times in last year used this NF

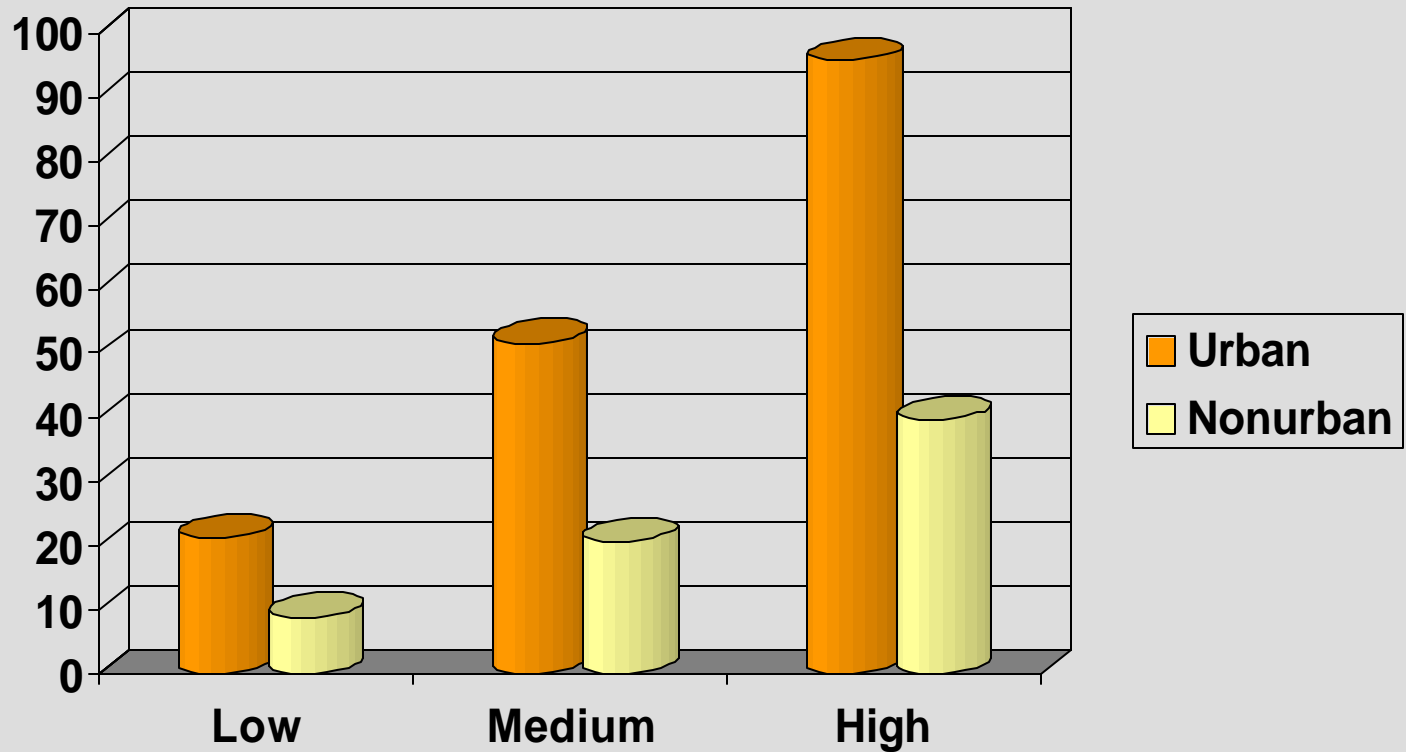
Recreation Visits to National Forests, in Millions, 2001

	NF visits	Site visits	Wilderness Visits	Viewing Corridors
US Total	214.1	256.2	10.7	215.4
R 1	12.2	13.6	.3	1.4
R 2	32.6	38.3	1.4	55.6
R 3	18.6	22.6	2.8	46.9
R 4	22.0	24.0	.9	9.7
R 5	28.7	34.7	.9	16.3
R 6	29.4	35.7	2.0	37.2
R 8	32.3	42.2	.8	33.0
R 9	29.0	35.5	.9	1.5
R 10	9.4	10.4	0.5	13.7

Wilderness Visitation, in Thousands



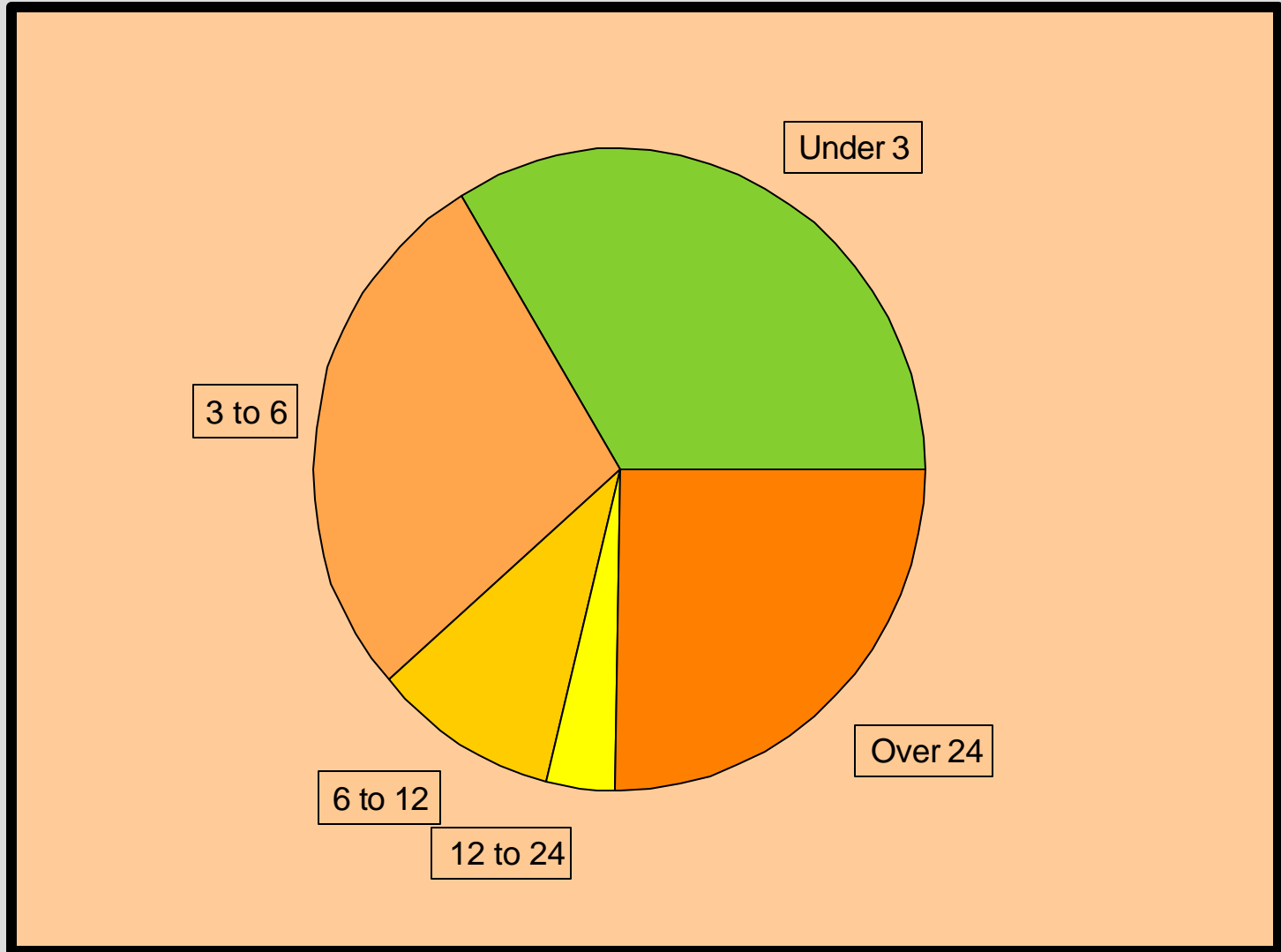
Average Wilderness Visitation Rates per day, by Forest Type



Duration of Wilderness Visits

Site Type	Site visit (hours)
Developed Day Use	1.9
Developed Overnite	25.9
General Forest Area	26.5
Wilderness	19.7

Distribution by Length of Stay (in hours)



Race/ethnicity Distribution (%)

Category	All NF Visits	Wilderness Site Visits
White	97.4	97.3
Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	0.4	0
Black/African American	0.8	1.5
Asian	0.3	1.2
Am. Indian/ Alaska Native	0.1	0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.8	0
Other	0.2	0

Age Distribution (%)

Category	All NF Visits	Wilderness Site Visits
20 and Under	17.6	21.6
21 to 30	13.3	20.4
31 to 40	22.1	33.4
41 to 50	15.0	15.1
51 to 60	12.8	6.1
61 to 70	12.8	2.6
Over 70	6.6	0.7

Perceptions of Crowding

Perception of crowding	Overnight Sites	Day Use Sites	Wilderness	General Forest
10 Over crowded	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9
9	6.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
8	16.9	1.1	14.4	1.1
7	3.2	4.8	0.0	4.7
6	13.7	2.0	1.3	10.1
5	27.9	15.1	53.4	19.2
4	13.7	7.7	5.0	15.1
3	13.3	27.2	14.3	13.8
2	0.0	25.9	11.6	18.4
1 Hardly anyone there	5.1	16.2	0.0	14.6

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SEGMENTING OUTDOOR MARKETS

PERCENT OF U.S. POPULATION

Inactives	24.1 %
Passives	14.5 %
Nature Loving Drivers	11.5 %
Nature and Family	14.2 %
Activity Samplers	13.0 %
Motor Consumptives	6.5 %
Skiers	8.4 %
Enthusiasts	7.8 %

INACTIVES (24.1 %)

- Most inactive segment of American society
- About equal male/female, high relative percentage (RP) Blacks and Hispanics, high RP over 55, especially over 65, very high RP foreign born, South Central
- High on spending time with grandchildren and low on cultural events, participating with an environmental group, and the internet
- High on managing NFs for raw materials, grazing cattle, supporting local businesses and low on leaving NFs natural in appearance

PASSIVES (14.5%)

- Most participate in relaxing activities; they don't do much else; "no" muscle powered activities
- High RP female, high RP blacks and Asian/Pacific Islanders, proportionate across ages, slightly more urban, about even across regions
- High on spending time with grandchildren, attending church, commuting to work and low on environmental activities and volunteering
- High on managing NFs for grazing, raw materials for industry, more roads, and more recreation facilities and services

NATURE LOVING DRIVERS

(11.5 %)

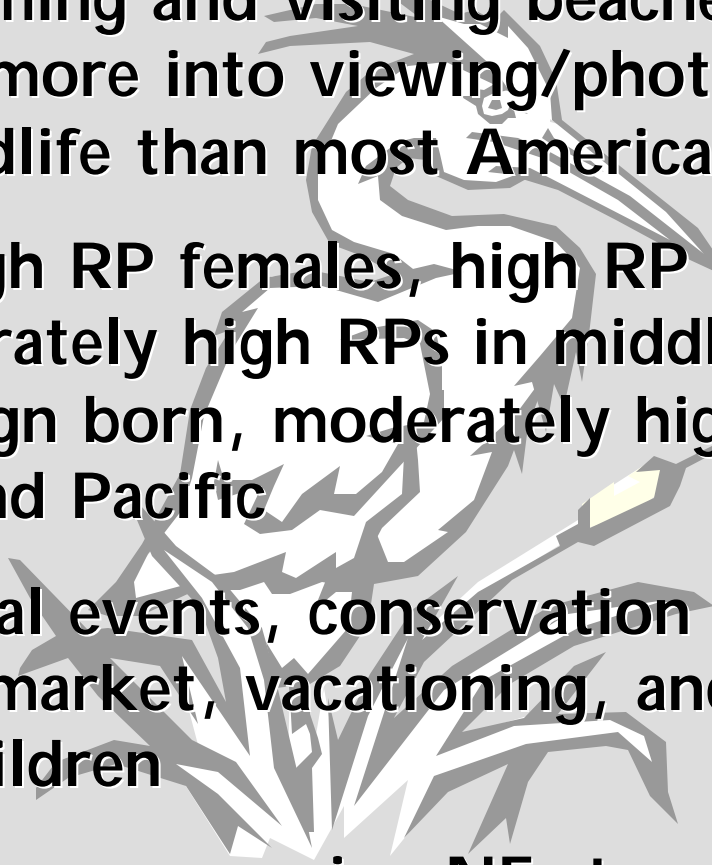
- Moderately more into viewing/ photographing/learning activities relative to the U. S. population with driving/sightseeing very prominent (92-94 %)
- Very high on spending time with grandchildren, following the stock market, collecting things as hobbies, gardening and somewhat low on attending classes or movies
- Two thirds female, three fourths white, low RP Hispanic, high RP over 45 (62%), low RP foreign born, high RP rural, Rocky Mountain Region
- High on Forest Service providing more educational opportunities and low on grazing

NATURE and FAMILY

(14.2 %)

- Just a bit less active in viewing/ photographing/learning activities relative to the U. S. population, but unlike “Nature Loving Drivers”, driving/sightseeing absent (only 3 – 4 %)
- High RP female, high RP Asian and Hispanic, about even across ages, high RP foreign born, somewhat low rural RP, about even across regions
- High on creative arts and attending church and low on environmental groups, country clubs and movies
- About the same as everyone else in the U.S. on what to emphasize in managing NFs

ACTIVITY SAMPLERS (13%)

- Higher participation percentages across most activities, especially swimming and visiting beaches and other watersides and more into viewing/photographing birds, flowers and wildlife than most Americans
 - Moderately high RP females, high RP whites and low Hispanic, moderately high RPs in middle age groups, very low RP of foreign born, moderately high urban residence, New England and Pacific
 - High on cultural events, conservation activities, creative arts, the stock market, vacationing, and the internet and low on grandchildren
 - Somewhat high on managing NFs to provide quiet natural places and leaving them natural looking and low on raw materials, grazing and roads
- 

MOTOR CONSUMPTIVES

(6.5 %)

- Hunting, fishing, camping, driving off road, snowmobiling, motor boating, and gathering
- Three quarters male, 83 percent white, high RP under 35, especially under 25, mostly U.S. born, very high rural, North Central, South Central and Rockies
- High on environmental activities, reading nature magazines, commuting, pets, and gardening and low on grandchildren, church, creative arts, and recycling
- Somewhat high on planting trees for timber, providing for future generations, and keeping forests natural looking and low on roads, grazing and raw materials production

THE SKIERS (8.4 %)

- Much higher than national percentages jet skiing, water skiing, surfing, motor boating, snow boarding, downhill skiing, windsurfing, diving and kayaking
- High RP males, high RP white, very high RP under 35, extremely low over 65, very low RP foreign born, Somewhat more urban, North Central
- High on country clubs, movies, volunteering, the internet, taking classes, vacationing and eating out and low on grandchildren, nature magazines, and gardening
- About the same as most Americans on how to manage NFs, a little low on quiet natural places

ENTHUSIASTS (7.8 %)

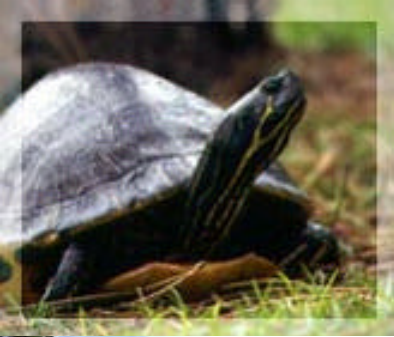
- Canoeing, scuba diving, windsurfing, X-country skiing, rowing, rafting, kayaking, backpacking, snowmobiling, and surfing and snorkeling make them stand out--

RELATIVE TO ALL OTHERS

- High RP male (63), mostly white (88), Mostly under 45, few foreign born, high RP rural, New England, Rockies

- Very high on environmental activities, volunteering, nature magazines, classes, country clubs, cultural events, gardening, And low on grandchildren and church

- Somewhat high on habitat for wildlife and fish, protecting rare species, and educational opportunities and low on managing National Forests for roads, raw materials, grazing and recreation facilities



Should we designate more Wilderness within Federal lands?

Important/
Very Important

Urban

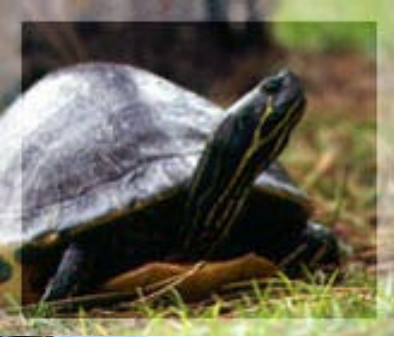
62%

Suburban

56%

Rural

47%



Should we designate more Wilderness within Federal lands?

Important/ Very Important

White

59%

Black

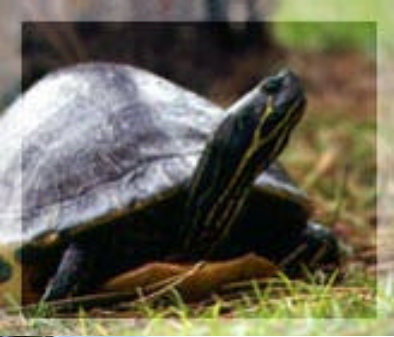
49%

Hispanic

56%

Asian

75%



Should we designate more Wilderness within Federal lands?

Important/
Very Important

North 66%

South 55%

Great Plains 50%

Rockies 59%

Pacific Coast 59%



✓ **Americans Support
and Value Wilderness**

✓ **How do we account
for those values?**

TOP 5 VALUES

- Protecting air quality
 - Protecting water quality
 - Protecting wildlife habitat
 - Protecting T&E species
 - Legacy for future generations
- (By Majority Vote)

Lowest 4 Values

- Providing recreation opportunities
- Providing spiritual inspiration
- Using areas for scientific study
- Stimulate income for tourism industry

PRINCIPLES of GOOD VISITOR

USE PLANNING

- Wilderness is first a national resource for the benefit of all
- Makeup and trends in national, regional and local populations define the public context within which your decisions resonate (or don't)
- Your optimum client base and most widely popular and beneficial offerings do not always match the wants of those standing at your door, and may not match wants of your current visitor base
- There are equity and other social issues associated with every decision you make and accounting for them is a responsibility of good planning
- Fragmented (compartmentalized) decision making is easier, but not better
- Good planning is forward looking, based on what could and should be, not necessarily what is or has been

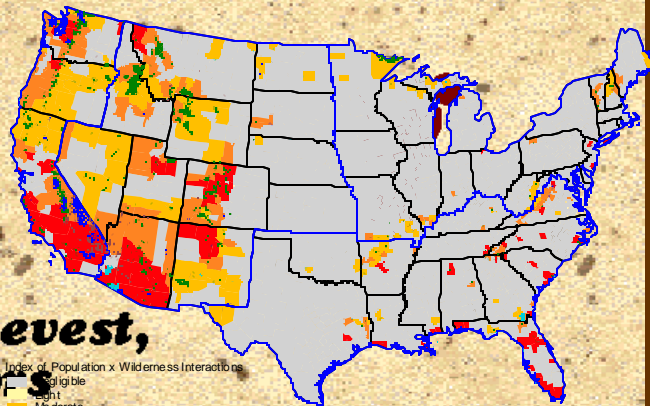
SOME POINTS TO PONDER

- Wilderness is an American treasure, owned by the people of this Country, held by you in a trust of stewardship
- Stewardship includes being informed of the positions of the “Stockholders” of this rich national treasure—**KNOW THE DATA**
- Limiting data to on-site surveys and “conventional wisdom” ignores the vast majority of the Wilderness System’s owners, the public, most of whom will never show up—**USE HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS**
- Use the tools of social science--surveys, segmentation, marketing principles, and customer service liberally--**DONT GUESS**

Footprints on the Land:

**An Assessment of
Demographic Trends
and the Future of
Natural Resources
in the United States**

**By
H. Ken Cordell
Christine Overdevest,
Principal Authors**



A book that examines population, demographic, urban, rural, economic, leisure and recreation trends of the United States, and spatially relates those trends to natural lands.

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Demographic Trends and the Planning and Management of Visitor Use in Wilderness



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www.srs.fs.fed.us/trends